

# **OUR OBLIGATIONS**

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## **To God, Mankind & Self**



**Pir Waheed Ahmad**

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## FOREWORD

In December 1899, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, the Promised Messiah, expressed his desire to write a book of teachings, in the following words:

فرمایا: ”میں چاہتا ہوں کہ ایک کتاب تعلیم کی لکھوں اور مولوی محمد علی صاحب  
کتاب تعلیم لکھنے کی خواہش اس کا ترجمہ کریں۔ اس کتاب کے تین حصے ہوں گے :  
ایک یہ کہ اللہ تعالیٰ کے حضور میں ہمارے کیا فرائض ہیں اور دوسرے یہ کہ اپنے نفس کے کیا کیا حقوق ہم پر ہیں۔ اور  
تیسرے یہ کہ بنی نوع کے ہم پر کیا کیا حقوق ہیں۔“

“I desire to write a book of education and to have it translated by Maulawi Muhammad ‘Ali sahib. This book would have three parts:

First, as to the obligations that we have unto Allah. The second, as to what rights do our own selves have upon us. And the third, as to the rights that mankind has upon us.”

(*Malfūzāt*, volume 1, p. 392 — ten-volume print edition)

According to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, one’s relationship with God and sympathy for His creatures is the real purpose of any religion. As he mentions it in his book, *Lecture Lahore*:

“The real purpose of religion is to recognize God Who has created the universe and to arrive in His love at a stage where the love of everything else is burnt up and to have sympathy with His creatures and to put on the garment of true purity.” [*Lecture Lahore, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 20, pp. 147-149; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 251]

Although the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> penned more than eighty books in the Urdu, Arabic and Persian languages, he never had the opportunity to write a book devoted entirely to the above subject matters. However, being important aspects of the religion of Islam, the above themes have been extensively explored and commented upon in his various speeches and writings.

The present writer feels that a book should be prepared that focuses on these three subjects, quoting extensively from the Holy Qur'an, the Ahādith and the writings and speeches of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

Although the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> makes no mention in the above quote of our obligations to other creatures of God besides human beings, he was well aware of their needs and exhorted his community to look after their wellbeing. His concern in this regard was so strong that he mandated their safety and security upon the initiates into his Jama'at by including them in the ten conditions of the *bai'at*<sup>1</sup>. According to these conditions, the initiate is obligated to do the following:<sup>2</sup>

Condition #4: Not to inflict injury on any of Allah's creatures.

Condition #9: Shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare.

For this reason, an additional chapter has been added that discusses the obligations that we have towards other creatures besides human beings and to the environment in which they live and flourish.

As is clearly mentioned in the above quotation, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> wanted such a book to be available to the English-speaking readership, which is largely non-Muslim. It is important to note that the manner in which Islam makes this three-fold classification of the duties of a follower is not so obvious in other religions.

In the present compilation, English translation of Qur'anic verses are based on Maulawi Sher 'Ali sahib's work. Most English translations of excerpts from the books of the Promised Messiah are taken from *The Essence of Islam*<sup>3</sup> [Volume 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2007; Volume 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2004; Volume 3, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2005; Volume 4, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2006; Volume 5, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2007]. References to the *Rūḥānī Khazā'in* are based on the 23-volume print

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<sup>1</sup> *Bai'at* is the oath of allegiance that one takes at the hands of his or her spiritual master. In the Jama'at Ahmadiyya, this *bai'at* marks the formal entrance of a person in the community. During the lifetime of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the *bai'at* was performed at his hands. After his demise, this ritual is carried out at the hands of his Successors or Khulafā'.

<sup>2</sup> Taken from alislam.org, Ten Conditions of Bai'at.

<sup>3</sup> Volumes 1-4 of *The Essence of Islam* are translated into English by Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan while Volume 5 is translated into English by Dr. Saleem-ur-Rahmān.

edition published in 1984. References to the *Malḡūzāt* are based on the ten-volume print edition published in 1984. At the suggestion of Markaz, Arabic texts of Qur’anic verses and Ahādith that are referenced in the book are now included.

Several persons have reviewed the draft of this book and have offered useful suggestions and recommendations to make it a better product. Foremost among these are Murabbi Hanan Sobhi sahib and Murabbi Asif Khan Mujahid sahib, both of Canada. Their corrections and suggestions have been of great help in improving the book. Similarly, the two reviews by the Markaz picked up a number of transliteration errors and also pointed out other ways to make the book more useful. The writer is gratefully indebted to all the reviewers for their help in this matter. Gratitude is also due to Sheikh Abdul-Wadood sahib, National Secretary Isha‘at, Canada, who arranged the local reviews and to Muniruddin Shams sahib, Additional Wakil At-Tasneef, London, who arranged the reviews at the Markaz level. May God reward all these persons handsomely.

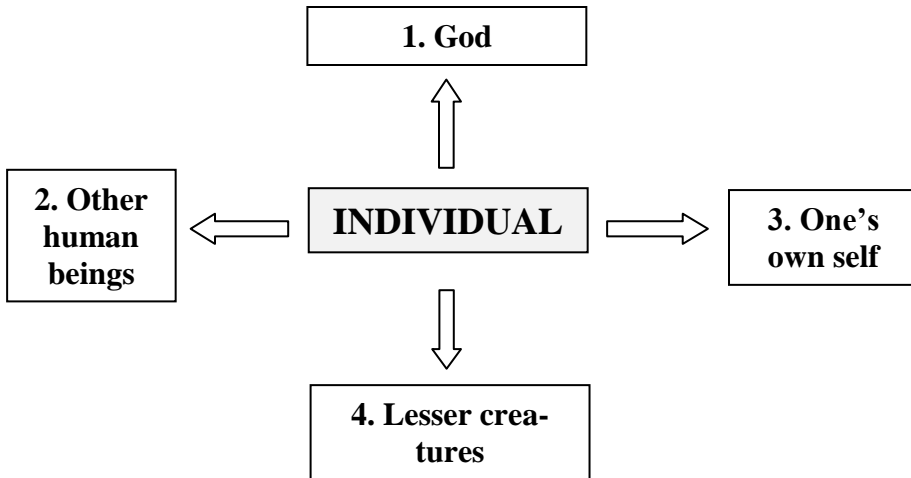
Pir Waheed Ahmad  
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Mississauga, Canada



# INTRODUCTION

**I**n the religion of Islam—as with many other faiths—individuals are required to lead their lives under clearly defined sets of rights and obligations. The primary Scripture of the Muslims—the Holy Qur’an—contains more than 700 commandments regarding our duties and obligations with respect to God, His messengers, officials in authority, parents, children, orphans, the poor, the sick, the dead, widows, wives, slaves, enemies, friends, neighbours, wayfarers, our own selves, other people and creatures in general. In all the above relationships, the Holy Qur’an clearly defines the rights as well as the duties that one owes to the other party. All the above relationships can be summarised into a simple four-fold system, as illustrated in the diagram below:

**Figure–1: Four important relationships of an individual in Islam**



Thus, no human being is, so to speak, an island unto himself. Every individual holds a bond of submission to one’s Creator; an affiliation of fellowship with other human beings; an obligation to one’s own self; and a

relationship of responsibility, care and custodianship towards lesser creatures of God. In all these relationships, we are exhorted to act with wisdom, compassion, understanding and justice. Performing the relevant duties and obligations pertaining to these four well-defined relationships is what makes our life full and meaningful—not only in the sight of God, but also in the eyes of our society and our own selves.

According to the Islamic philosophy, our life is full of purpose and meaning and should not be taken lightly. Unlike other animals, we are not expected to spend our lives simply *existing*. The entire period from our birth to our death is meant to be spent with certain goals and objectives. The achieving of these objectives is not only desirable but also imperative for our wellbeing in this life as well as in the hereafter.

The four obligations mentioned above conform to the various purposes of human existence, as briefly described below. These concepts shall be explored in more detail in the four chapters that follow.

## **PURPOSE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE**

Very simply stated, the purpose of human existence is to carry out the commands of God—whatever they may be. As mentioned above, these commands relate to various aspects of our existence and interactions in this world. While the essence of all these commands can be summarised as the “worship of God”, the commands do relate to other activities as well which may not invoke the idea of conventional worship in many minds. Broadly speaking, all actions resulting from obedience to God may be included in the term “worship” since this word has diverse meanings as will be explained later.

As shown in the figure above, various aspects of human relationships form the broad framework of human purpose in life. Briefly stated, these objectives include the following:

1. To recognise the Creator of the universe through the myriad signs that He displays and to believe in Him as the Supreme and only deity. Having recognised and believed in this Supreme Being, we need to follow His dictates and commandments and to worship Him in the fullest and broadest sense of the word possible.



2. We human beings form a common community that is extremely diverse not only in its geographic, linguistic and cultural aspects but also in terms of appearance, physical strength, economic endowment, mental acumen and spiritual faculties. Despite this apparent diversity, we are inevitably tied together through a common line of descent in the evolutionary process. All human beings are members of one large family and are thus woven together through the fabric of mutual rights and obligations that need to be discharged through understanding, empathy and fairness. It is the duty of the individual to be a beneficial member of society and to contribute towards its harmonious and peaceful existence.
3. While we are exhorted to care for other human beings, we are also required to consider the well-being of our own selves. Thus, staying pure and clean, keeping chaste and modest, observing meekness and humility, cultivating good habits, acquiring education and knowledge, keeping good company, making ourselves worthy of God's love, and developing a personal relationship with God are just some of the many objectives that we need to fulfil in this respect. We need to make full use of the God-given talents and faculties so that we can lead a full, successful and meaningful life in this world. At the same time, we need to keep in mind that the present world is only transient and that our actions should also work towards achieving salvation and peace with God in the hereafter, which is our final and true abode,
4. We know that human beings stand at the pinnacle of God's diverse creatures with which we share this planet. While this is definitely a point of great pride and honour to our species, it also places a burden of immense responsibility with respect to their protection, care and custodianship. The ever-expanding sphere of human activities on this planet is endangering the life and environment of numerous life forms. Being God's vicegerent on earth, the responsibility for the wellbeing of all other species also falls upon our shoulders.

As stated previously, these four purposes of human existence are explored in more detail in the Chapters that follow.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes that one purpose of the advent of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> during the age of darkness was to establish the rights of God and the rights of men:

“The Holy Prophet [peace and blessings of Allah be on him] appeared in this age of darkness and destruction, and reformed perfectly both sides of the balance and re-established the rights of God and the rights of man on their true centre.” [*Malfūzāt*, vol. II, pp. 79-80; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 316]

# **OUR OBLIGATIONS**

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## **TO GOD, MANKIND & SELF**

**Based on the Holy Qur'an,  
the Ahādith, and the writings of  
the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>**



# *Chapter 1*

## **OBLIGATIONS UNTO GOD**

### **[*Huqūq-ullah*, the Rights of God]**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**W**hile we human beings incur several obligations in our various relationships in life, our foremost duty is to our own Creator, without Whom we would not have existed at all.

Broadly speaking, the fulfilling of every commandment of God is our obligation and an utmost duty. It does not matter whether a commandment deals with His own worship or relates to the gentle treatment of His many creatures. Whatever the directive may be, it needs to be obeyed fully and acted upon promptly.

Having made the above point, there are some commandments of God that deal only with our personal relationship with Him. Known as *huqūq-Allah* (Divine rights or the rights of God), these obligations are those that we owe directly to our Creator and not to any other human being or creature. The carrying out of all such commandments is strictly to seek the pleasure of God and He alone is the One Who may reward us in this respect.

In this chapter, we will discuss the Islamic concept of God, how do we recognise Him through the various signs in the universe, why we believe in Him and what are the various obligations that we have with respect to such Supreme Being.

#### **THE CONCEPT OF GOD**

In some form or another, every religiously inclined person believes in the existence of God. Very simply stated, God is that Supreme Being above Whom none other exists with like powers and attributes. The Italian Roman

Catholic Monk, Saint Anselm, also puts forth the same idea of God in his book, *Proslogion*, written in 1078 C.E.:

“God is a Being than Whom no greater can be conceived.”

Entirely for linguistic reasons, different peoples of the world have used different words for the Supreme Being. Thus, He is called Brahman in Sanskrit; Ahura Mazda in the Avesta language of the Zoroastrians; Yazdān and Khudā in Persian; Yahweh and Elohim in Hebrew; El in the Aramaic language of Jesus Christ; Theos in Greek; Deus in Latin; Allah in Arabic; Dieu in French; Gott in German and, of course God in English. It must be appreciated that these are simply different appellations for the same Ultimate Reality. Thus, Allah is not a tribal god of the Arabs—as many people in the West mistakenly believe—but the Arabic equivalent of the English word ‘God’. It is for this reason that the word Allah is used in the Old and New Testaments when they are translated into Arabic. In fact, the word ‘Allah’ existed among the Arabs long before the appearance of Islam.

The true concept of God is elegantly explained in the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. Expounding on the theme that God is the ultimate cause in the universe, he writes in his landmark book, *Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*:

“God is the light of the heavens and the earth. Every light that is visible on the heights or in the valleys, whether in souls or in bodies, whether personal or impersonal, whether apparent or hidden, whether in the mind or outside it, is a bounty of His grace. This is an indication that the general grace of the Lord of the worlds envelops everything and nothing is deprived of that grace. He is the source of all grace, the ultimate cause of all lights and the fountainhead of all mercies. His Being is the support of the universe and is the refuge of all high and low. He it is Who brought everything out of the darkness of nothingness and bestowed upon everything the mantle of being. No other being than Him is in himself present and eternal or is not the recipient of His grace. Earth and heaven, man and animals, stones and trees, souls and bodies, have all come into existence by His grace.” [*Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 1, pp. 191-192, footnote; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 38]

Islam has not presented a new God to the world. People have believed all along in the same Creator God. The only difference is that Islam has clarified His attributes and removed any misconceptions associated with Him. As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“The God of Islam is the same God Who is visible in the mirror of the law of nature and is discernible in the book of nature. Islam has not presented a new God but has presented the same God Who is presented by the light of man's heart, by the conscience of man, and by heaven and earth.” [*Majmū‘a-e-Ishtihārāt*, vol. II, pp. 310-311; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 39]

The Islamic concept of God is further elaborated by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> in his book, *Lecture Lahore*:

“He is the Originator of all creation and is the fountainhead of all grace. He is the Master of all recompense and everything returns to Him. He is near and yet far, and He is far and yet near. He is above all, but it cannot be said that there is someone below Him. He is more hidden than everything else is but it cannot be said that there is something more manifest than Him. He is Self-Existing in His Being and everything is alive through Him. He is Self-Sustaining and everything is sustained by Him. He supports everything and there is nothing that supports Him. There is nothing that has come into being on its own, or can live without Him on its own. He comprehends everything, but it cannot be said what is the nature of that comprehension. He is the Light of everything in heaven and earth and every light has shone forth from His hand and is a reflection of His Being. He is the Providence of the universe. There is no soul that is not sustained by Him and exists by itself. No soul has any power which it has not obtained from Him and which exists by itself.” [*Lecture Lahore, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, p. 152-153; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 43-44]

Since God is not a material object and we cannot see Him through our mortal eyes, His existence has been constantly questioned and debated throughout recorded history. Over the ages, many people have tried to prove that God exists and many others have countered with arguments that such a person either does not exist or that we are incapable of determining His ex-

istence. The arguments—both in favour and against the existence of God—have ranged from the very naïve and simplistic to the most esoteric and convoluted. The net result of this entire debate in history has been that no mathematical or physically irrefutable proof has emerged on which everyone would agree. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes about this difficulty in his book *Ḥaqīqat-ul-Wahī*, in the following words:

“The Being of God is transcendental and beyond the beyond and is most secret and cannot be discovered by the power of human reasoning alone. No argument can prove it conclusively, inasmuch as reason can travel only so far that contemplating the universe it feels the need of a Creator. But the feeling of a need is one thing and it is quite another to arrive at the certainty that the God, Whose need has been felt, does in fact exist. As the operation of reason is defective, incomplete and doubtful, a philosopher cannot recognize God purely through reason.” [*Ḥaqīqat-ul-Wahī*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 22, pp. 120-121; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 39-40]

The British theologian, David Jenkins<sup>4</sup>, also sums up this situation very neatly when he says that:

“No statement about God is simply, literally true. God is far more than can be measured, described, defined in ordinary language, or pinned down to any particular happening.”

The God presented by Islam is the God for all people—irrespective of their beliefs or ethnicity. Commenting upon God’s attributes and the generality of His grace, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“It needs no argument that the true and perfect God, to believe in Whom is the duty of every creature, is the Lord of the worlds. His Providence is not confined to a particular people, age or country. He is the Sustainer of all peoples, of all ages, of all places and of all countries. He is the fountainhead of all grace. Every physical and spiritual power is bestowed by Him, and the whole universe is sustained by Him and He is the support of all.

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<sup>4</sup> David Edward Jenkins (1925-2016), British theologian and author of economic and political discourses, was best known as the Bishop of Durham.



God's grace comprehends all peoples, all countries and all ages, lest any people should complain that God bestowed His bounties upon others, but not upon them, or that others received a Book from Him for their guidance, but they did not, or that in other ages He manifested Himself through His revelation, inspiration and miracles, but that He remained hidden in their age. By bestowing His grace upon all He obviated all these objections and out of His vast qualities He did not deprive any people or any age of His physical or spiritual bounties." [Paighām-e-Şulh, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, p. 442; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 53-54]

In fact, considering the very concept of God, it is rather naïve of us to expect that some irrefutable physical proof of God's existence should have been found over the centuries and millennia that the religions have existed. God is neither an object nor physical in His nature. Even the word "Spirit" does injustice to His person since it, too, carries some connotations of being bound by space, time and the laws of nature.

The increasing emphasis on rationalism and empiricism over the past three centuries has made it all the more difficult to come up with incontrovertible proofs for the existence of God. Many proofs that have been used historically for the existence of God have now been demonstrated to be either suffering from fallacies or are incomplete in some other respect. Again, it was unrealistic on our part to suppose that conventional logic and our own intellect would have supplied the necessary proofs about someone Who defies all physical and material constraints.

Historically, the proofs for the existence of God have ranged from the physical to the emotional. In the physical category fall the three well-known lines of reasoning that include: (i) the Cosmological Argument, (ii) the Teleological Argument, and (iii) the Ontological Argument.

**(1) The Cosmological Argument** posits that every action in the universe has a cause and every created thing has a creator. Thus, the ultimate cause and the ultimate creator in the universe must be God Who Himself remains uncaused and uncreated. The American analytic philosopher, William Lane Craig (b. 1949) formulates the gist of this argument through the following simple syllogism:

- (i)      Whatever begins to exist has a cause;
- (ii)     The universe began to exist;  
                 Therefore:
- (iii)    The universe has a cause.

The Cosmological Argument is based on the concept of first- or prime-mover, which was introduced by Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and later elaborated by medieval Muslim philosophers such as Al-Kindi (d. 873 CE), Al-Ghazzali (1058-1111 CE) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 CE).

More recently, however, the Cosmological Argument has come under serious scrutiny from quantum physics in which the phenomenon of quantum indeterminacy at the subatomic level indicates that the causal principle may break down. In this context, the American philosopher Michael Lou Martin (1932-2015) argues that even if the universe had a beginning in time, this beginning may be uncaused. Similarly, philosopher Quentin Smith (b. 1952) cites the example of virtual particles, which appear and disappear apparently at random, to advocate uncaused natural phenomenon. In his book, *Universe from Nothing*<sup>5</sup>, cosmologist Lawrence Maxwell Krauss (b. 1954) suggests that quantum mechanics can explain how space-time and matter can emerge from “nothing”.

**(2) The Teleological Argument** presents the flawless design of the universe in support of God’s existence. The Intelligent Design concept posits that every aspect of our universe is the result of a deliberate and well-planned fabrication that clearly points to the hand of an Intelligent Creator. The most common form of this argument invokes the watchmaker analogy that was first presented by the French metaphysical philosopher, René Descartes (1596-1650), and then supported by the English philosopher and scientist, Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727). These scholars upheld that the physical laws showed a remarkable mechanical perfection in the workings of the universe, much like an exquisite watch, and the watchmaker in this case was God. More recently, the Perfect Design argument contends that the fundamental constants of nature are so finely tuned that even the slightest variation in their values would not have allowed the existence of this uni-

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<sup>5</sup> *Universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather than Nothing*, 2012, Free Press.

verse as we see it or the life that thrives in it. It is contended that the likelihood of these constants to be so finely tuned all by themselves or through some random action, is extremely remote. Commenting on the orderliness of the universe, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> makes a very interesting point that such perfection of design only shows that perhaps there is an Intelligent Designer but does not confirm it. In this context, he writes in his book, *Chashma'-e-Masīhī*, in the following words:

“Search for God is a difficult matter. It is not an affair of worldly philosophers and wise men. Observation of the heavens and earth only leads to the conclusion that although orderliness indicates that the universe should have a Creator yet it is not proof that such a Creator in fact exists. There is a great deal of difference between ought to be and is. The Holy Qur'an is the only book that sets forth His existence as a fact and not only urges the seeking of God but makes Him manifest. There is no other book, which makes manifest the Hidden Being.” [*Chashma'-e-Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 20, pp. 351-352; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 6]

**(3) The Ontological Argument** or the third line of reasoning for the existence of God, was first posited in the Western world by Saint Anselm (1033-1109) of Canterbury who said that God is a being greater than Whom no other being can be conceived and Who exists even in the mind of a person who denies His existence. Thus, if the greatest possible Being exists in the mind, He must surely also exist in reality.

With the emergence of rationalism and modern science, several notable philosophers and scientists of modern times have taken up the subject of God's existence. Since the concept of God refers to a Being Who is not testable under scientific methodology, the matter of His existence is deemed to lie outside the purview of modern science by the very definition.

**(4)** In the emotional category is included the supposition that God is in fact too subtle to be perceived physically and can only be felt by the delicate sensitivity of the human heart. This **Experiential Argument** has been put forward not only by the devotees of many creeds but also by psychologists and philosophers dealing with the origin of man's religion. In the ab-

sence of personal experience of God, one could rely on the testimony of such persons who could be fully trusted to be telling the truth. Such persons would include prophets, saints and other men of God who claim to have *seen* and *conversed* with God. If one trusts these persons to be telling the truth, then their statements with respect to God could be safely relied upon. In this context, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Nasīm-e-Da‘wat*, in the following words:

“The first duty of a person, therefore, is to acquire certainty with regard to the existence of God, and to adopt a religion through which this certainty can be acquired so that he should fear God and shun sin. How can such certainty be acquired? It cannot be acquired through mere stories. It cannot be acquired through mere arguments. The only way of acquiring certainty is to experience God repeatedly through converse with Him or through witnessing His extraordinary signs, or by keeping company with someone who has that experience.” [Nasīm-e-Da‘wat, *Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 19, pp. 447-448; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 3-4]

One important aspect of experiencing God is to have converse with Him. This can happen at an individual’s personal level as well as with those whom the individual trusts. Islam is perhaps the only religion in the world that presents a living and speaking God—a God that not only spoke in the past but also speaks today. According to the Holy Qur’an, a deity that cannot speak is not worthy of being regarded as such<sup>6</sup>. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> emphasises the importance of God speaking to His chosen ones throughout the ages in the following words:

“The sign of a true religion is that through its teaching such righteous ones should continue to arise who should arrive at the stage of a *Muhaddith* to whom God Almighty should speak face to face. The first and foremost sign of

<sup>6</sup> When the Prophet Abraham broke the idols to pieces except their chief, the people asked him whether he had done it. At this, Abraham suggested that they should ask the chief idol. The people responded:

لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

“Certainly thou knowest well that these do not speak (21:66). Thus, the ability to speak is an extremely important attribute of a deity.

the truth of Islam is that at all times it produces such righteous ones with whom God Almighty talks.” [*Hujjat-ul-Islam, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 6, p. 43; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 30]

The concept of God and the many characteristics and traits attributed to Him, vary from creed to creed. In the Christian theology, God can have a son with like attributes; in the Hindu philosophy, the Supreme God is remote from human beings who are then required to beseech lesser gods that are more accessible. While the religion of Islam strongly advocates the idea of One God, the attributes ascribed to Him may differ in the minds of Muslim believers because of sectarian differences. Thus, while all Muslims truly believe that God listens to their prayers, many maintain that He does not speak to them now as He used to speak to earlier peoples. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> has strongly refuted this notion and asserts that there is absolutely no attribute of God that has gone in abeyance—particularly His attribute of speaking to His creatures:

“Our God is the One Who is living today as He was living before, and Who speaks today as He spoke before, and hears today as He heard before. It is a false notion that in this age He hears but does not speak. Indeed, He both hears and speaks. All His attributes are eternal and everlasting. None of His attributes has fallen into disuse or will fall into disuse.” [*Al-Waṣīyyat, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 20, pp. 309-311; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 47]

“True knowledge about God depends upon this that we should reach the Living God Who speaks clearly to His favourites and bestows satisfaction and contentment upon them with His Majestic and delicious speech. He speaks to them as one man speaks to another and converses with them as a certainty that is beyond doubt or suspicion.” [*Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, vol. 5; *Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 21, pp. 31-32; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 140]

“A god who does not prove his own existence afresh every time is as if he does not exist. He is like an idol which neither speaks nor hears nor answers questions, nor can he manifest his power in such a manner that even a confirmed atheist should not be able to doubt it.” [*Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, part 5, *Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 21, pp. 31-32; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 142]

Thus, experiencing God through His speech and converse is an extremely important proof of His existence. This experiencing of God is carried out through the human heart. It would not be surprising that being the Most Subtle Himself, it takes the subtlest of human instruments to detect God. A rational analysis leading to the existence of God may show Him only as an impersonal Creator of this universe. By contrast, the God perceived by the human heart emerges as a friendly, caring, forgiving, merciful and loving Being. Blaise Pascal<sup>7</sup>, the well-known 17<sup>th</sup> century French scientist and philosopher, expresses this viewpoint in the following words:

“It is the heart which perceives God and not the reason.”

(5) There is also the **Ethical Argument** that holds that ethics and morality—the principles that allow us to differentiate between right and wrong—are more effective if we believe in and fear a Supreme Being and hope to achieve everlasting bliss in the form of paradise.

## RECOGNISING GOD FROM HIS SIGNS

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly encourages the reader to see God's signs around him—the wonders of the heavens and the earth—and see the hand of God working behind these magnificent creations. God claims that His creation has been brought forth—ranging from sub-atomic particles to the largest galaxies and galactic clusters—with wisdom and the requirements of truth. Nothing, He claims, has been created in vain or without purpose. Moreover, throughout the workings of this amazing universe, there is absolutely no flaw that can be discerned. These themes are echoed repeatedly in the Holy Qur'an, as is evident from a selection of quotes given below:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْغَيْبِ ۖ  
لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ لَهُمْ آلَاءَ لَا تَحْذَرُهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ۚ إِنَّ كُنَّا فَعِلِينَ

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<sup>7</sup> Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), the French scientist, philosopher and mathematician who is credited with the development of the theory of probability.

And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in play.

If We had wished to find a pastime, We would surely have found it in what is with Us if at all We were to do *such a thing*. (21:17-18)

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ  
وَآجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Do they not reflect in their own minds? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two but in accordance with the requirements of wisdom and for a fixed term. But many among men believe not in the meeting of their Lord. (30:9)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي  
الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ  
مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ۖ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships which sail in the sea with that which profits men, and in the water which Allah sends down from the sky and quickens therewith the earth after its death and scatters therein all kinds of beasts, and in the change of the winds, and the clouds pressed into service between the heaven and the earth—are indeed **Signs** for the people who understand. (2:165)

وَكَأَيِّن مِّنْ آيَةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

And how many a **Sign** is there in the heavens and the earth, which they pass by, turning away from it. (12:106)

وَمِنَ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَعِهِمْ إِذَا  
يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٠﴾

And among His **Signs** is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of whatever living creatures He has spread forth in both. And He has the power to gather them together when He pleases. (42:30)

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾  
 وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣١﴾  
 وَاختِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ  
 بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾  
 تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾  
 وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٣٤﴾  
 يَسْبَغُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا ۚ فَبِشْرَاهُ بَعْدَ آيِ  
 الْيَمِّ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

Verily in the heavens and the earth are **Signs** for those who believe.

And in your own creation and *in* that of all the creatures which He scatters *in the earth* are **Signs** for a people who possess firm faith.

And *in* the alternation of night and day, and the provision that Allah sends down from the sky, whereby He quickens the earth after its death, and *in* the change of the winds, are **Signs** for a people who *try to* understand.

These are the **Signs** of Allah which We rehearse unto thee with truth. In what word, then, after *rejecting that of* Allah and His **Signs** will they believe?

Woe to every sinful liar,

Who hears the **Signs** of Allah recited unto him, and then proudly persists *in his disbelief*, as though he heard them not. So give him the tidings of a painful punishment.

And when he learns something of Our **Signs**, he makes a jest of them. For such there is an abasing punishment. (45:4-10)

Laying emphasis on the signs of God, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book *Nasīm-e-Da‘wat*:



“It is useless to believe in a god whose powers are not felt and who does not himself make manifest the signs of His own existence and life.” [*Nasīm-e-Da‘wat, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 19, pp. 373-374; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 6]

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> goes as far as to say that the existence of God is well demonstrated in the universe:

“God has not imposed belief in anything which He has not demonstrated.” [*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, p. 347; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 60]

## UNITY OF GOD

Islam is a strictly monotheistic creed and advocates belief in a single Creator God. The Islamic credo—*Lā ilāha illallah* (there is none worthy of worship except Allah)—summarises this point. Unity of God is perhaps the most emphasised aspect in the Holy Qur’an and the point with which the early Arabs had the most difficulty in accepting. Although appearing rather straightforward and simple, the concept carries immense implications and is, philosophically speaking, very deep and profound. Explaining the Unity of God, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

“The true Unity of God, the affirmation of which is demanded by God and upon which salvation depends, is to believe that God in His Being is free from every associate, whether it is an idol or a human being, or the sun or moon or one’s ego, or one’s cunning or deceit; and to conceive of no one as possessing power in opposition to Him, nor to accept anyone as sustainer, nor to hold anyone as bestowing honour or disgrace, nor to consider anyone as helper or assistant; and to confine one’s love to Him and one’s worship to Him and one’s humility to Him and one’s hopes to Him and one’s fear to Him. No Unity can be complete without following three types of particularisation. First, there is the Unity of Being, that is to say, to conceive the whole universe as non-existent in contrast with Him and to consider it mortal and lacking reality. Secondly, the Unity of attributes, that is to say, that *Rububiyyat* and Godhead are confined to His Being and that all others who appear as sustainers or benefactors are only a part of the system set up by His hand. Thirdly, the Unity of love

and sincerity and devotion; that is to say, not to consider anyone as an associate of God in the matter of love and worship and to be entirely lost in Him.” [Sirāj-ud-Dīn ‘Isa’i ke Chār Sawālon ka Jawāb, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 12, pp. 349-350; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 169-170]

And again:

“Belief in Unity gives birth to the love of God Almighty, as one realizes that all benefit and loss is in His hands, that He is the true Benefactor and that every particle proceeds from Him without the intervention of anyone else. When a person achieves this holy condition, he is known as a believer in the Unity of God. One condition of belief in Unity is that man should not worship stones, or human beings, or anything else, and should express disgust and abhorrence against deifying them; the second condition is that no undue importance should be attached to material means. The third condition is that one’s ego and its purposes should also be excluded and negated. Very often, a person has in mind his own qualities and power and imagines that he has achieved certain good with his own power and he depends so much upon his power that he attributes everything to it. Real faith in the Unity of God is achieved when a person negates his own powers also. [*Malḥūzat*, vol. III, pp. 79-82; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 175-176]

## BELIEVING IN GOD

In the religion of Islam, a follower has the obligation to recognise the Supreme Being and to believe in Him. The act of believing in Him has several aspects:

- Believing in God means that we recognise Him as the sole Creator, the Sustainer and the Master of the universe.
- Believing in God means that we recognise all His creation, whether visible or invisible. Muslims believe in the Seen as well as the Unseen in the universe. The knowledge about the manifest aspects of the universe comes to us through our five basic senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The knowledge about the unseen aspects of the universe comes directly from God—through inspiration, reve-

lation, visions and true dreams.

- Believing in God means that we accept as truthful all His edicts and commandments that have been conveyed to us by His messengers, prophets and emissaries. Thus, Muslims believe in *all* such emissaries sent to humanity—not only those who appeared in the Abrahamic creeds of which Islam is a part, but also in other creeds of the world that had been established from time to time. A consequence of belief in all the prophets is belief in all their teachings, some of which have been preserved as Holy Scriptures of the various faiths.
- Believing in God means that we accept the coming of a day of reckoning when our deeds are judged and requited according to their merit. Muslims believe in such a day of Destruction, Resurrection, Gathering and Judgment and in the life that follows after death.
- Believing in God means that we can supplicate to Him and that He listens to our prayers and beseeching. While we accept the fact that God listens to our pleas, we recognise that their outcome is not always according to our own wishes. There are some aspects of His actions that have been decreed to take place based on the requirements of wisdom and according to His overall plan for the universe.
- Believing in God and recognition of His attributes also means that we can develop a personal relationship with Him—a relationship that is based on mutual friendship, love and converse.

## **DOUBTS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

Because God is invisible and beyond the reach of our scientific means of determination, his existence has always been doubted throughout history. Scientists have tried to demonstrate that the universe could have come into being all by itself, that life is a logical product of chemical and biological reactions and that prayers and miracles are nothing more than coincidences and wishful thinking. The existence of God has been challenged more and

more as our scientific knowledge increased and we began to rely more and more on our own powers of reasoning, rationality and logical analysis. Historically speaking, several individuals have expressed their concern about this trend, which has reached a climax in today's society that is so reliant on scientific advancements and technological developments. One person who has boldly stood up for the cause of God and against the onslaught of materialism in modern times is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. He addresses this issue in many of his writings but most notably in *Chashma'-e Ma'arifat*, as quoted below:

“It is not within the power of man to comprehend all the activities of the Divine, as they are above reason, intellect and imagination. A man should not be proud of his pittance of knowledge that he has to some degree comprehended the system of cause and effect, inasmuch as that knowledge of his is very limited, as if it were a millionth part of one drop out of the ocean. The truth is that as God Almighty Himself is unbounded, His activities are unbounded also. It is beyond and above human power to reach the reality of every activity of God.

Contemplating His eternal attributes we can, however, affirm that as Divine attributes have never fallen into disuse, therefore, in God's creation, some species have always existed in one form or the other; but any eternal personal coexistence (with God—Ed.) is false. It is to be remembered that, like His attribute of creation, His attribute of destruction has always been in operation all the time and that also has never fallen into disuse.

The philosophers have put forth every effort to bring the creation of heavenly and earthly bodies within the purview of their physical laws and to establish the source of all creation, but they have utterly failed to do so. Whatever they have gathered together as the result of their physical research is quite incomplete and defective. That is why they have not been able to adhere to their theories throughout and have always changed them about. As their research is confined entirely to their reason and speculation and they receive no help from God, they cannot emerge out of their darkness. No one can truly recognize God till he understands that there are numberless activities of the Divine, which are far beyond and above human power, reason, and speculation. Before reaching this stage of understanding, a person is either an atheist and has no faith in God, or if he does believe in God, that god is the result of his own reasoning and is not the God Who manifests His Own Being and the mysteries of Whose powers are so numerous that human reason cannot encompass them.

Since God has bestowed upon me the knowledge that His powers are wonderful, that they have depth upon depth and are beyond of beyond, and are outside comprehension, I have always considered the philosophers to be rank disbelievers and secret atheists. It is my personal observation, and I have had experience of such wonderful Divine powers, that we can only describe them as something coming into existence out of non-existence. I have described some instances of these signs at some other places. He who has not observed this wonder of Divine power has observed nothing. We do not believe in a god whose powers are limited by our reason and speculation and there is nothing beyond. We believe in the God Whose powers, like His Being, are unlimited, unconfined, and unending.” [Chashma'-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in, vol. 23, pp. 280-282; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 41-43]

## WORSHIP OF GOD

### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The most notable aspect of our relationship with God relates to His worship. Both, the Arabic word *ʿibāda* and its English translation ‘worship’, carry an abundance of meanings that include: to respect, to revere, to devote, to pay homage, to venerate, to adulate, to admire, to honour, to adore, to idolize, and to love. Thus, worship is not limited to some ritual practices but includes all the above aspects in its application. Worship of God is so fundamental in Islam that it has been likened to being man’s sole purpose of existence, as it says in the Holy Qur’an:

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾  
وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

But glorify thy Lord praising Him, and be of those who prostrate themselves *before Him*.

And **continue worshipping thy Lord**, till death comes to thee. (15:99-100)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿٣﴾

Surely it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee with truth; so **worship Allah**, dedicating your faith to Him in all sincerity. (39:3)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that **they may worship Me**. (51:57)

وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾

So remember the name of thy Lord, and **devote thyself to Him with full devotion**. (73:9)

Acts of worship cement ties of love and devotion between man and His Creator. Worship of God, in some form or another, is common to all religions of the world. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ

“To every people have We appointed ways of **worship** which they observe” (22:68)

Writing about worship as the primary purpose of human existence, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> notes in his book, *Islāmī Uṣūl ki Philosophy*:

“Though different people, on account of their short-sightedness or lack of courage, appoint various types of objectives for their lives and stop short at worldly purposes and desires, yet the purpose that God Almighty has specified in His Holy Word is:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾

I have created jinn and men so that they should recognize and worship Me. According to this verse, the true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him. It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself lay down the purpose of his life by his own authority inasmuch as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He

Who created him and bestowed upon him better and higher faculties than those bestowed upon other animates, has enjoined a purpose for his life. Whether anyone comprehends that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man's creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him." [*Īslāmī Ūsūl ki Philosophy, Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 10, p. 414; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 461]

After making the point that worship of God is the primary purpose of human existence, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes extensively in his various discourses as to how this purpose can be achieved. Among the range of means that he cites for attaining this purpose, he includes correct recognition of God, appreciating the perfect beauty of God, being aware of the benevolence of God, praying to God, striving in the cause of God, remaining steadfast in seeking God, keeping good company and the achieving of spiritual milestones such as true dreams, revelations and visions.

Of all the means that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> cites, he lays the greatest emphasis on the correct recognition of God. As he states in his book, *Īslāmī Ūsūl ki Philosophy*:

"The question is how and through what means can man achieve this purpose? Let it be clear that the principal means for achieving this purpose is the correct recognition of and faith in the True God. If this first step is wrongly taken and a person sets up a bird, or an animal, or any of the elements, or a human being as his god, it cannot be expected that his subsequent steps would be taken along the straight path. The True God helps His seekers; but that which is dead cannot help the dead. Allah the Glorious has illustrated this point beautifully in this verse (13:15):

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ  
بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كِبَاسٌ كَفِّیْهِ إِلَى الْبَاءِ لِيُبَدِّلَ فَاؤُهُمَا هُوَ بِأَلْغَاهِ ۖ وَمَا  
دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (13:15)

Worthy of worship alone is the same true God Who is Omnipotent. Those on whom they call for help beside Him, do not respond to them at all. Their case is like that of one who stretches forth his hands towards water and ask it to en-

ter his mouth. But will it come do so? Not at all. Thus all the prayers of those who are not cognizant of the True God are futile. [*Islāmī Ūsūl ki Philosophy*, p. 101-103; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 463-464]

## **WORSHIP IS ONLY FOR GOD**

Worship, as a religious activity, is common to all creeds of the world—whether they be tribal cults or the more advanced major religions. However, while many of these creeds involve idol-worship, avatar-worship, human-worship, creature-worship, sun-worship, star-worship, moon-worship and fire-worship, it is only Islam in which worship is carried out strictly for the Supreme Being.

Islam recognises only one true God of the universe. He is alone in His attributes of creation, nourishing and destruction. He is single because absolute might and absolute power cannot be shared. God is One because everything else is His creation and thus cannot rise to the level of Godhood. One important attribute of God is that there is nothing else in this universe that is like Him—in the fullness of His attributes. Hinduism and Christianity face great logical difficulty in defending their true monotheistic status by resorting to convoluted arguments that God is really one despite having several forms. Islam wisely sidesteps such an issue by not recognising different forms of God. In Islam, the various actions and aspects of God are regarded only as His attributes rather than pertaining to different forms of the same Being. While the difference may appear to be merely semantic to some people, it is, nevertheless, a very important difference as far as the philosophy is concerned. Islam has made the concept of God very logical and simple to understand. He is One, Unique and sole possessor of all the attributes that are necessary in Godhood. For this reason, neither angels, nor prophets, nor sages, nor anyone or anything else can become objects of worship in Islamic theology. Representation of the Invisible God in the form of figures, illustrations and idols created by man's imagination is an anathema in this religion. Thus, the two frequently repeated phrases in the Holy Qur'an with respect to God are that "He is One" and that "only He is worthy of our worship". Similarly, in their declaration of faith, Muslims assert: *Lā ilāha illallāh*—there is none worthy of worship except Allah. As it states in the Holy Qur'an:



وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا

And worship Allah and **associate naught with Him**... (4:37)

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

Allah is He **beside Whom there is none worthy of worship**... (4:88)

أَمَرَ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

He has commanded that **you shall not worship anything save Him**. That is the right religion, but most men know *it* not. (12:41)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢١﴾

And We sent no Messenger before thee but We revealed to him, *saying*, “**There is no God but I; so worship Me alone**.” (21:26)

Commenting on the Qur’anic verse 2:113 that talks about submitting completely to God, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> emphasises the point that worship should be solely for God:

“God Almighty should become one’s object of worship and true goal and love, and that worship, love, fear and hope should be for God alone, to the exclusion of all others. [*A’ina-e-Kamālāt-e-Islam, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 5, p. 60; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 21]

He reiterates this notion in his book, *Lecture Lahore*, with respect to worship by a true believer:

“He should abstain from associating anything with God. He should worship neither sun nor moon, nor stars, nor air, nor fire, nor water, nor any other thing whatsoever. He should not exalt worldly means so as to depend upon them as if they were God's associates, nor should he depend upon his own enterprise and effort, for this is also a species of association.” [*Lecture Lahore, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 20, pp. 154; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 45]

## THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP IN ISLAM

In the religion of Islam, nothing is done without purpose. The purpose of worship in this religion is manifold. Other than complying with His command to worship Him, the philosophy of worshipping God in Islam is to evoke His guidance in our affairs—both worldly as well as spiritual; to seek His help during periods of trials and tribulations; to acquire His attributes; to strive in His cause; to be grateful to Him and to make our lives purposeful and full of meaning—just to mention a few.

When we praise a thing, we wish to acquire it and appreciate its attributes. Praising God during worship is appreciating His attributes and awakening a desire to acquire them: to be merciful when the situation demands, to be firm when the situation requires. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said, “Create in you the attributes of God”. Mere recitation of God’s praise by the tongue, therefore, is not sufficient.

Below are enumerated several objectives of worship in Islam:

### 1. TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS

One important purpose of worship is to gain piety and righteousness. The foundations of true piety and true righteousness lie in a theistic framework. It is not possible to be truly righteous and moral without the belief in and worship of God. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

O ye men, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, **that you may become righteous**; (2:22)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, **so that you may become righteous**. (2:184)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

O ye who believe! bow down and prostrate yourselves in Prayer, and worship your Lord, and **do good deeds that you may prosper**. (22:78)

Emphasising the importance of righteousness, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

“In the Holy Qur’an more emphasis has been laid on virtue and righteousness than on any other commandment. The reason for this is that righteousness bestows the strength to resist all vice and urges progress towards all good. Righteousness is in all circumstances a charm that guarantees security and is a citadel for safeguarding against all harm. [*Ayyām-ush-Şūlḥ, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 14, p. 342; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 347]

## 2. TO FEAR GOD

One important aspect of worship is to harbour fear of God in one’s heart at all times. This constant fear of God keeps us away from wrongs and sins. Although God is indeed majestic and awe inspiring, we do not fear Him because His person is frightening or terrifying in any way. The fear in relation to God pertains to incurring His displeasure through some fault or omission of ours. Otherwise, the love and mercy of God is such that no one sees the like of it even in the person of one’s mother. The concept of fearing God and the exhortation to fear Him are frequently repeated in the Holy Qur’an:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

And **fear** Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him. (2:195)

وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٨﴾

And **fear** Me *alone*, O men of understanding. (2:198)

قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ ۖ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

Say, "The benefit of this world is little and the Hereafter will be better for him who **fears God**; and you shall not be wronged a whit." (4:78)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

O ye who believe! **fear** Allah and seek the way of approach unto Him and strive in His way that you may prosper. (5:36)

أُدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾  
وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۚ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ  
مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Call upon your Lord in humility and in secret. Surely He does not love the transgressors

And create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order, and call upon Him in **fear** and hope. Surely, the mercy of Allah is nigh unto those who do good. (7:56-57)

وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً

And remember thy Lord in thy mind with humility and **fear**, (7:206)

الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

(Referring to the righteous):

Those who **fear** their Lord in secret, and who dread the Hour of Judgment. (21:50)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ

O people, **fear** your Lord; (22:2)

### 3. TO ACCEPT GOD AS GUARDIAN

Every creature in this world has someone to protect and guard it. When we are young, this protective role is provided by our parents, siblings and other close relatives and friends. In the religion of Islam, God is our ultimate Protector and Guardian. We seek His protection from physical harm and we beseech His refuge from spiritual waywardness. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٤٣﴾

“Sufficient for us is Allah, and an excellent **Guardian** is He.” (3:174)

ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no God but He, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is **Guardian** over everything. (6:103)

أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوا مِن دُونِي وَكِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

“Take no **guardian** beside Me.” (17:3)

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٣١﴾

And put thy trust in Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a **Guardian**. (33:4)

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٠﴾

*He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no God but He; so take Him as thy **Guardian**.* (73:10)

### 4. TO PLACE TRUST IN GOD

Not being all-powerful and all-knowing, we humans continually place our trust in others. Initially, this trust is placed in our own parents. Then, as we begin our schooling, we place trust in our teachers from whom we gain knowledge and guidance. Later in life, this trust is transferred to other people in society with whom we deal—officials, administrators, military per-

sonnel, clerics—people who have been charged to look after our welfare and security. We also place trust in our own abilities—in our wealth, our strength and our knowledge—to deal with various situations that we encounter in life. We place our trust in medicines to cure us, in vehicles to transport us, and in physicians to restore us back to health. Islam allows the placing of trust in all such persons and things with the proviso that the ultimate trust rests in God. People, even when they are acting in good faith, can be mistaken and wrong. It is God alone Who is free from such blemish. Placing unlimited trust in others and in one's own faculties amounts to a kind of partnership with God. Thus, the Holy Qur'an constantly reminds the reader to place his or her trust in the most trustworthy of all beings—God Almighty:

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

And on Allah should the believers **rely**. (5:12)

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And put your **trust** in Allah, if you are believers. (5:24)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

O Prophet, Allah is **sufficient** for thee and for those who follow thee of the believers. (8:65)

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ط

And to Allah belong the hidden things of the heavens and the earth, and to Him shall the whole affair be referred. So worship Him and put your **trust** in Him **alone**. (11:124)

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهِ ط

And **trust** thou in the Living One, Who dies not, and glorify *Him* with His praise. (25:59)

While it is permissible to make use of available means, placing one's trust

entirely in the means amounts to partnership with God. As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> explains in the *Malfūzāt*:

“Then when a person relies wholly upon the means, and puts his whole trust in them, in so doing he ascribes to them some of the attributes of God, and sets them up as another god beside Him. When he leans towards one side, he advances towards *shirk*. Those who lean towards officials and receive bounties and titles from them, honour them as they should honour God and thus in a way worship them. This alone uproots a person’s belief in the Unity of God and diverts him from his true purpose and casts him far away.” [*Malfūzāt*, vol. III, pp. 79-82; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 175]

## 5. TO SEEK FORGIVENESS FROM GOD

It is a well-known adage that to err is human—to forgive Divine. Human beings possess a baser self that is ever inclined towards evil. Elaborating on this situation and advocating the need for repentance, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“It is obvious that man is very weak by nature and has been charged with hundreds of Divine commandments. On account of his weakness, he falls short in carrying out some Divine commandments and sometimes he is overcome by the desires of the self that incite to evil. On account of his weak nature, he deserves that at the time of any slipping, if he should repent and seek forgiveness, God’s mercy should save him from being ruined. It is a certainty that if God had not been the Acceptor of repentance, man would not have been charged with these hundreds of commandments. This proves conclusively that God turns towards man with mercy and is Most Forgiving.” [*Chashma’-e-Ma’rifat, Rūhānī Khazā’in*, vol. 23, pp. 189-190; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 235]

As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> notes: “Error and forgetfulness are characteristics of human nature.”<sup>8</sup> He elaborates on this point in his book, *Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, in the following words:

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<sup>8</sup> *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 156

“Whenever a person turns to God in remorse and repentance at the time of stumbling or sinning, he becomes deserving that God should turn to him with mercy and forgiveness. This is not limited to once or twice, but it is the eternal attribute of God Almighty that He turns towards a remorseful and repentant servant whenever the latter turns to Him. Thus it is not God’s natural law that a weak person should not stumble or that the nature of those who are overcome by their animal faculties should be changed, but His eternal law is that those who commit sin should be forgiven through repentance and seeking forgiveness.” [Brāhīn-e-Ahmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 1, pp. 187, footnote 11; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 238-239]

Thus, the Holy Qur’an frequently exhorts the reader to ask for forgiveness of one’s wrongdoings and to turn unto God with repentance. Human beings are frail and prone to error. Even the most pious of men sometimes commit errors of judgment or omission. In Islam, one continually seeks one’s forgiveness from God Who is the Forgiver of sins and Oft-Returning. As it says in the Holy Book:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦١﴾

“But they who repent and amend and openly declare *the truth*, it is these to whom I turn with **forgiveness**, and I am Oft-Returning with *compassion and Merciful*.” (2:161)

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

“And vie with one another in asking for **forgiveness** from your Lord, and for a Paradise whose expanse is the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing—” (3:134)

رَبَّنَا فَاعْفُ رَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

“Our Lord, **forgive** us, therefore, our sins and remove from us our evils, and in death join us with the righteous.” (3:194)



إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ  
فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ<sup>ط</sup> وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٨﴾

Verily, Allah undertakes to accept the **repentance** of only those who do evil ignorantly and then **repent** soon after. These are they to whom Allah turns with mercy; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. (4:18)

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

And whoso does evil or wrongs his soul, and then asks **forgiveness** of Allah, will *surely* find Allah Most **Forgiving**, Merciful. (4:111)

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ<sup>ج</sup>

And verily, thy Lord is full of **forgiveness** for mankind despite their wrongdoing... (13:7)]

قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَافُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا<sup>ط</sup> إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say, “O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah **forgives** all sins. Verily He is Most **Forgiving**, Merciful.” (39:54)

In *Malfūzāt*<sup>9</sup>, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> describes the three conditions of repentance without which true repentance cannot be achieved. These are summarised below:

1. “The first condition is to get rid of wicked fancies which arouse evil propensities. Ideas have great influence. Every action is preceded by an idea. Thus, the prime condition for repentance is that evil thoughts and fancies

<sup>9</sup> *Malfūzāt*, vol. 1, p. 138-140; *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 240-241

should be discarded.”

2. “The second condition is remorse. Everyone’s conscience admonishes him over every evil, but an unfortunate person leaves his conscience suspended. So a sinner should express remorse over his sin and evil action and should reflect that the pleasure to be derived from them is temporary.”
3. “The third condition is a firm resolve that he will not revert to those vices. If he adheres to this resolve, God will bestow upon him the strength for true repentance and he will be rid altogether of his vices which will be replaced by good morals and praiseworthy actions.”

## 6. TO SEEK SALVATION IN THE HEREAFTER

The ultimate purpose of our life is to seek salvation. In the religion of Islam, this salvation is achieved when our good deeds outweigh our faults and errors in life and God’s mercy looks down upon us favourably in the hereafter. While we have some idea as to what constitutes a good deed and what amounts to a bad action, the ultimate goodness and wickedness of every deed is known only to God. Thus, we could find salvation despite indulging in numerous sins just because God found one particular act as pleasing to Him and, conversely, we could find ourselves under His wrath despite having led an apparently pious life—in our own estimation—due to God being displeased with a particular fault of ours. Thus, maintaining fear of God in our hearts and continual pleas of forgiveness are the only tools that can increase our chances of obtaining salvation. Salvation in Islam consists of avoiding the displeasure and wrath of God, receiving His reward in the form of paradise, and—most of all—obtaining His pleasure and ultimate approval.

Commenting on the true meaning of salvation, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Chashma’-e-Masīhī*:

“.... Salvation means the achievement of that eternal prosperity for which human nature hungers and thirsts. It is achieved only through the personal love of God after His full understanding and the establishment of a perfect relationship with Him and its condition is that love should surge up on both sides....

For a seeker after truth the only question is how to achieve true prosperity,

which should be the means of eternal joy and happiness. The sign of a true religion is that it should carry one to that prosperity. Through the guidance of the Holy Qur'an we learn that that eternal prosperity is found in the true understanding of God Almighty and His holy and perfect and personal love, and in perfect faith which should create a lover's restlessness in the heart. These are a few words and yet even a volume cannot set forth a complete exposition of them." [Chashma'-e-Masīhī, Rūhānī Khazā'in, vol. 20, pp. 359-360; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 249-250]

As the Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّبِيَّةَ مِنْ أَمَنَ  
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا  
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

Surely, the Believers, and the Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians—whichever party *from among these truly* believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds—shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear *shall come* upon them, nor shall they grieve. (2:63)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّبِيَّةَ وَالنَّصَارَى مِنْ أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

Surely, those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians—whoso believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, on them *shall come* no fear, nor shall they grieve. (5:70)

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَ  
لَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely grant him a pure life; and We will surely bestow on such their reward according to the best of their works. (16:98)

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

So whoever does good works and is a believer, his effort will not go unappreciated and We shall surely record it. (21:95)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٩٦﴾

As to those who believe and do good works, they will surely have a reward that will never end. (41:9)

Summarising the philosophy of salvation as described by the Holy Qur'an, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Chashma'-e Ma'rifat*:

“What the Holy Qur'an says in this context is summarised below:

O My servants, do not despair of Me. I am Ever Merciful and Benevolent and cover up sins and forgive them and am more Merciful towards you than anyone else. No one will have mercy on you as I have. Love Me more than you love your fathers for I am greater in love than they are. If you come to Me I shall forgive all your sins and if you repent, I shall accept your repentance. If you advance towards Me slowly, I shall run to you. He who seeks Me shall find Me and he who turns to Me shall find My door open. I forgive the sins of a penitent even if they are more than the mountains. My mercy upon you is great and My wrath is little because you are My creatures. I have created you and therefore My mercy comprises all of you.” [*Chashma'-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 23, p. 56; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 250]

## 7. TO BE GRATEFUL TO GOD

To be grateful to one's benefactor is a sign of good manners and correct breeding. In our everyday life, we constantly thank the people who render favours to us, some of which may be as minor as opening a door. The harmonious operation of a society practically demands that the individuals constantly thank each other for receiving help, support and acts of kindness.

In the religion of Islam, God is the ultimate Bestower of all goodness that comes our way even if it appears to come from the hands of men. To

remember this fact and to be grateful to God, is also a kind of worship. As Dr. Mir Muhammad Ismā‘īl<sup>ra</sup> says in his book, *Bukhār-e Dil*:

حق کے تجھ پر ہیں جس قدر انعام  
اُن کا گنا بھی اک عبادت ہے

All the bestowals that God has made upon you—  
To count them is also a kind of worship.

For this reason, to be grateful to God is an oft-repeated injunction in the Holy Qur’an:

فَاذْكُرُونِيْٓ اَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاَشْكُرْوا لِيْ وَلَا تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

Therefore remember Me, and I will remember you; and be **thankful** to Me and do not be **ungrateful** to Me. (2:153)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

O ye who believe! eat of the good things We have provided for you, and render **thanks** to Allah, if it is He Whom you worship. (2:173)

وَسَيَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

And Allah will certainly reward the **grateful**. (3:145)

كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾

Thus does Allah explain to you His Signs that you may be **grateful**. (5:90)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْماً طَرِيّاً وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا ۚ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَازِرَ فِيْهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

And He it is Who has subjected *to you* the sea that you may eat therefrom fresh flesh, and may take forth therefrom ornaments which you wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing through it, *that you may thereby journey* and that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be **grateful**. (16:15)

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ  
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts, that you might be **grateful**. (16:79)

وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّا يَشْكُرُنَا ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

And whosoever is grateful is grateful for the good of his *own* soul; but whosoever is **ungrateful**, truly my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous. (27:41)

فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ ۚ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

Then seek sustenance from Allah, and worship Him, and be **grateful** to Him. Unto Him will you be brought back. (29:18)

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ۖ

If you are **ungrateful**, surely Allah is Self-Sufficient *being independent* of you. And He is not pleased with **ingratitude** in His servants. But if you show **gratefulness**, He likes it in you. (39:8)

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ ۚ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٥٢﴾  
إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ ۖ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا ۖ وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٥٣﴾

We created man from a mingled sperm-drop which We cause to pass through trials; then We turned him into a hearing, seeing being.

We have shown him the Way, whether he be **grateful** or **ungrateful**. (76:3-4)

## 8. TO STRIVE IN THE CAUSE OF GOD

Worship also means to strive in the cause of God—to do all those things which God wishes us to do and which He has decreed for the well-being of His creatures. Broadly speaking, striving in the cause of God means to carry out all those actions which are good and Godly and to shun and obstruct all those actions which are evil and satanic. In this way, we become the Hand of God or His *helper* in establishing peace and harmony in the world.

Striving in the cause of God can assume a multitude of expressions. One common form that comes to the mind of most people is fighting in the cause of God to eradicate oppression and cruelty. Such form of striving that can lead to the loss of life or limbs may be necessary under certain situations. However, striving is not limited to just armed conflict. We can help the people by our physical effort and financial aid, and the minds and attitudes of people can be changed through discourse and discussion. None of this may require fighting. While mankind is admittedly far from seeing the end of warfare any time soon, we are gradually becoming more mild-mannered in our response to provocation and aggression. Thus, while an armed conflict may have been necessary in the past, the same issue could be resolved today through reason and argument—carried out by oral discussion and written transmission. The pen of today has truly replaced the sword of the past.

Striving in the cause of God is an oft-repeated command in the Holy Qur'an. A few of the examples are presented below:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ  
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٩﴾

Those who believe and those who emigrate and **strive** hard in the cause of Allah, it is these who hope for Allah's mercy; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (2:219)

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَكَلَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ  
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

Do you suppose that you will enter Heaven while Allah has not yet distinguished those of you that **strive** in the way of Allah and has not yet distinguished the steadfast? (3:143)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا<sup>ف</sup>

O ye who believe! be steadfast and **strive** to excel in steadfastness ... (3:201)

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقُعْدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ<sup>ط</sup> فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقُعْدِينَ دَرَجَةً<sup>ط</sup> وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى<sup>ط</sup> وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقُعْدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا<sup>٩٦</sup> دَرَجَتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً<sup>ط</sup> وَرَحْمَةً<sup>ط</sup> وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا<sup>٩٧</sup>

Those of the believers who sit *still*, excepting the disabled ones, and those who **strive** in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their persons, are not equal. Allah has exalted in rank those who **strive** with their wealth and their persons above those who sit *still*. And to each Allah has promised good. And Allah has exalted those who strive above those who sit *still*, by a great reward,

*Namely, by degrees of excellence bestowed by Him, and by special forgiveness and mercy. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (4:96-97)*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ<sup>٣٦</sup>

O ye who believe! fear Allah and seek the way of approach unto Him and **strive** in His way that you may prosper. (5:36)

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ<sup>٣٧</sup> فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ<sup>٣٨</sup>



And fight them (the disbelievers) until there is no persecution and religion is wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Watchful of what they do. (8:40)

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجْهَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْظَمَ دَرَجَةً  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾  
يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾  
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Those who believe and emigrate *from their homes for the sake of God* and **strive** in the cause of Allah with their property and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. And it is they who shall triumph.

Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him, and of *His* pleasure, and of Gardens wherein there shall be lasting bliss for them;

They will abide therein forever. Verily, with Allah there is a great reward. (9:20-22)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ ۖ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَ  
الْقُرْآنِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَذَٰلِكَ  
هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١١﴾

Surely, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Paradise they shall have—they fight in the cause of Allah, and they slay and are slain—a promise *that He has made* incumbent on Himself in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice, then, in your bargain which you have made with Him; and that it is which is the supreme triumph. (9:111)

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۖ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ  
 مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِن قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ  
 شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَ  
 اعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٩﴾

And **strive** in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it. He has chosen you, and has laid no hardships upon you in religion; *so follow* the faith of your father Abraham; he named you Muslims *both* before and in this *Book*, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over mankind. Therefore observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Master. An Excellent Master and an excellent Helper! (22:79)

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

And *as for* those who **strive** in Our path—We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily Allah is with those who do good. (29:70)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِحَوَارِيِّنَ مَنْ  
 أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ

O ye who believe! be helpers of Allah, as said Jesus, son of Mary, to *his* disciples, “Who are my helpers in *the cause of* Allah.” The disciples said, “We are helpers of Allah.” (61:15)

## 9. TO ACQUIRE THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God has not explained His real nature to us. Given today’s level of our knowledge, the subject of His nature would be totally beyond our comprehension. This does not mean that we do not know anything about God. The Holy Qur’an goes to great lengths to inform us about God’s attributes. We

are told that He is One, Eternal, Great, High, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, Mighty, Independent, Wise, Sublime, Magnificent and Most Exalted. With respect to the universe, He is the Creator, the Fashioner, and the Originator. With respect to the living creatures, He is the Nourisher, the Provider, the Giver of life and the Bringer of death. When dealing with human beings, He is Merciful, Gracious, Compassionate, Beneficent, Just, Honourer, Abaser, Equitable, Patient and Forgiving. For every possible situation, there is some attribute or aspect of God that is appropriate for the occasion. Every trait that is noble, praiseworthy and dignified belongs to God in a superlative degree. The Holy Qur'an asserts this truth by saying:

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

And to Allah *alone* belong *all* perfect **attributes**. So call on Him by these... (7:181)

Of His infinite attributes, the Holy Qur'an mentions about 99 or so. In the Holy Qur'an, these attributes of God—the manner in which he acts and deals with His creation—are referred to as the Way of God:

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عِبْدُونَ

The Way of Allah; and who is better than Allah with respect to the Way, and Him alone do we worship. (2:139)

One purpose of mentioning God's attributes to us is to encourage us to emulate them—to the extent humanly possible—during our own dealings with other human beings and lesser creatures.

## 10. TO RECOGNISE THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD

An important purpose of God's worship is recognising His benevolence—both, in the general form in which it is showered upon all of humanity as well as the specific way in which it is rendered to an individual. On the subject of God's benevolence, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in *Īslāmī Uṣūl ki Philosophy*:

“The third means of achieving the purpose of life is to become aware of the benevolence of God Almighty for love is generated by beauty and benevolence. The benevolent attributes of God Almighty are set forth briefly in the *Surah Fātiḥa*, where it is said:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ۝ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ۝

It is obvious that the perfection of benevolence consists in that God Almighty created His servants from nothing and thereafter His Providence was bestowed upon them and He became the support of everything, and all types of His mercy were manifested for His servants. His benevolence is without limit and beyond count as is repeatedly set forth in the Holy Qur’an, as, for instance:

وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا (14:35)

If you try to number the bounties of Allah, you will certainly not be able to count them. [*Islāmī Ūsūl ki Philosophy*, p. 101-108; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 465]

## 11. TO FIND GOD

According to the religion of Islam, the ultimate objective of man’s quest in life is to find God—to acquire Him, to befriend Him and to be one with Him. One of the primary purposes for the advent of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> was to rekindle this desire in the hearts of the people so that they would try to seek God. He witnessed a Muslim nation that, while appearing to be following the dictates of Islam outwardly, had given up on the idea of seeking God Himself. He wished to revive the true Islamic spirit—which had been kept alive intermittently through the appearance of numerous Sufis and saints. Thus, much of his writings and speeches are given to this subject of seeking and acquiring God in this very life. Emphasising the importance of God in our lives, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book *Kashti’-e-Nuḥ*:

“Our paradise lies in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one’s life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft! run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life

that will save you. What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news, and by beating what drum shall I make the announcement that this is our God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen?" [*Kashf-e Nūh, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 19, pp. 21-22; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 38]

## RITUALISTIC WORSHIPS IN ISLAM

In the broader sense of the word, worship is the following of every command of God and the undertaking of every task that is pleasing to Him. According to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, even the placing of a morsel of food in the mouth of one's wife with the intention of pleasing God is considered worship. It is not only our actions that may constitute worship but also our beliefs, our thoughts, our perceptions and our intentions would be included in the category of worship if they are undertaken with the intention of obtaining God's pleasure. Any act of worship loses its significance entirely if the purpose behind it is anything other than seeking the pleasure of God.

Having made the above point, there are indeed some acts in Islam that are included in the category of ritual worship—worship whose performance has been clearly defined in terms of schedule, frequency, mode, routine, timing, practice and procedure. These various "ritualistic" worship that are described below are nothing but means of training the soul, disciplining one's self, and gaining the pleasure of God. As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states, "These forms of worship are essential for the purification of the spirit."<sup>10</sup> The five basic acts of worship in Islam, known as the Five Pillars, are given below:

1. A Declaration of adherence to Islamic faith,
2. Saying of a formal, prescribed Prayer, five times a day,
3. Keeping of Fasts during the month of Ramaḍān,
4. Giving of obligatory alms (*Zakāt*), and
5. Performing of the *Hajj* or Pilgrimage

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<sup>10</sup> Speech at the Annual Conference, 1906, pp. 20-21; *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 316.

## 1. DECLARATION OF FAITH (*KALIMA*)

The first step towards accepting the faith of Islam is to declare it. The Declaration of Faith or the *Kalima* carries in its two short sentences the entire essence of Islam:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

*La ilaha illallahu Muhammad-ur rasulullah*

“There is no deity except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

The above declaration does not exist as such in the Holy Qur’an, where it is mentioned in two separate verses, as follows:

There is none worthy of worship but He... (35:4)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah... (48:30)

مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

Since the early days of Islam, the reciting of the *Kalima* marked the act of conversion to the new faith. The word *Kalima* literally means a word or spoken thing.

The Declaration of Faith embodies a large number of individual obligations upon us. It requires that we not only recognise our Creator as our only deity, but that we accept all His commandments, His actions and His admonitions as true and worth following. At the same time, we refrain from elevating anyone or anything else to a similar status and station in our eyes. Thus, not only that we need to worship Him, He remains the only One that should be so worshipped. Likewise, by declaring that the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> is His Messenger, we acknowledge his bona fide status as God’s message bearer. This implies that his personal practice of the faith and his sayings and admonitions also become our guiding principles in life.

Laying emphasis on the true meaning and spirit of the Islamic *Kalima*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“Reflect on the meaning of the credo

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

By affirming this by his tongue and confirming it with his heart a person

proclaims that he has no God beside Allah.

*Ilah* is an Arabic word and connotes the One worshipped Who is the Beloved and the True God. This credo, which the Muslims have been taught, is the epitome of the Holy Qur'an. It is difficult for everyone to commit long books to memory. God Almighty is All-Wise and has announced a brief credo. Its meaning is that till God is preferred to everything, till He is acknowledged as the only One to be worshipped and till He becomes the True Goal, man cannot achieve salvation. It is mentioned in the *Hadith* that:

مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَدَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

He who declares that 'There is none worthy of worship beside Allah' will enter paradise.

People have misunderstood this *Hadith*. They imagine that it is enough to repeat the credo verbally for a person to enter paradise. God Almighty is not concerned with words. He is concerned with hearts. This means that those who impress the true concept of the credo upon their hearts, so that the greatness of God Almighty is fully impressed on their minds, will go to heaven.

When a person truly believes in the credo, no one beside God can remain the object of his affection or worthy of his worship or his desired one. The spiritual station of the *Abdāl* a *Qutab* and a *Ghauth* is none other than the sincerest belief in the *Kalima*:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

.... This sublime credo excludes all deities beside Allah. It is, therefore, necessary to push out of one's heart all personal and universal gods so that the heart is purified for Allah alone. [Speeches to Jalsah Sālāna, 1906, pp. 1-5; *Malfūzāt*, vol. 9, p. 103-104; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 293-295]

To believe in the unity of God does not only mean that we avoid taking idols as our deities but also that nothing else besides the Person of God occupies the place of trust and reliance in our hearts. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> points to this common pitfall to which many of us succumb, often unintentionally:

“Some idols are manifest but some are subtle. For instance, to rely on material means beside Allah is also an idol, but a subtle one....

Those subtle idols that people carry about under their arms are difficult to throw out. Great philosophers and wise people cannot get rid of them. They are very fine insects which cannot be perceived except through the microscope of the great Grace of God. They inflict great harm on a person. Those idols are personal emotions which carry men a far distance in repudiation of the rights of their fellow beings and of God Almighty. Many who are called learned and erudite and *Maulavis* and who study the *Ahadith* cannot recognize these idols inside them, and worship them. To avoid these idols is possible only for a very brave man. Those who follow these idols cultivate rancour in their hearts, deny the rights of others, and imagine that they have captured a quarry. They lay undue stress upon material means and rely entirely upon them. Till these tendencies are removed altogether, the Unity of God cannot be established. [Speeches to Jalsah Sālāna, 1906, pp. 1-5; *Malḡūzāt*, vol. 9, p. 104-106; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 295]

## 2. THE PRAYER

There are two types of prayers in Islam: *Du‘a* or Silent Prayer, and *Ṣalāt* or ritual congregational Prayer. The underlying concepts and philosophies are the same in both cases.

The word *Du‘ā* comes from the Arabic root *da‘* which means to call, summon or ask. The Silent Prayer can be performed at any time, using any language, and for any length of time. Even when people are undertaking *Du‘a* collectively, they may be using different words and praying for different things. The importance of *du‘ā* can be appreciated from the following Hadith:

"الدَّعَاءُ مُخَّ الْعِبَادَةِ"

“The supplication is the essence of worship.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 48, Hadith 2*

The word *Ṣalāt* comes from the Arabic root *ṣalla* which means to pray or invoke blessings and mercy. The formal Prayer needs to be performed at specific times during the day, preferably in congregation, has specified wording and must be said in the Arabic language.



Essentially, prayer is beseeching God for His help, support and guidance in our affairs. It is carried out in a state of extreme humility to the Creator Who is the Knower of the seen as well as the unseen. The Holy Qur'an describes the concept of prayer in very simple language by saying:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the **prayer** of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way. (2:187)

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۖ

And He accepts *the prayers* of those who believe and do good works, and gives them more out of His grace ... (42:27)

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> elaborates the concept of prayer in his book, *Lecture Sialkot*, in the following words:

“In short, prayer is that sovereign remedy which converts a handful of dust into precious metal. It is the water, which washes out inner impurities. With such prayer, the soul melts and, flowing like water, falls at the threshold of the Divine. It stands before God and bows down before Him and prostrates itself before Him. Indeed, the *Ṣalāt* that Islam teaches is a reflection of such prayer.” [Lecture Sialkot, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 20, pp. 222-224; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 227]

### Philosophy of Prayer

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> regards the act of praying as a fundamental instinct of man just as the response to supplication is the tradition of the Divine. He elaborates this point in the *Malfūzāt* comparing our beseeching to God with an infant's cries for its mother's milk:

“When a child being driven by hunger cries for milk, then milk is gener-

ated in the mother's breasts. The child does not know what prayer is, but his cries draw the milk. This is a universal experience. Sometimes when the mother does not perceive the presence of milk in her breasts, the child's cries help to draw it. Then can our cries before God Almighty draw nothing? They certainly draw everything. But those sightless ones, who parade themselves as scholars and philosophers, cannot see it. If a person were to reflect on the philosophy of prayer, keeping in mind the connection and relationship which a child has with its mother, he would find it easy to understand. The second type of mercy comes into operation after supplication. Go on asking and you will go on receiving.

أَدْعُوْنِيْ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

is not mere verbiage, but is a characteristic of human nature. To supplicate is human; to respond is Divine. He who does not understand and does not believe is false. The illustration of the child that I have set forth expounds the philosophy of prayer in an excellent way. [*Malfūzāt*, vol. 1, p.123; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 198-199]

According to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, the prayer works through the establishment of a relationship of love and trust between the supplicant and his Lord. As he says in his book, *Barakātud Du'ā*:

“The principle of prayer is that there is a mutually attractive relationship between a pious servant and his Lord. To begin with, the mercy (*Rahmaniyyat*) of God Almighty draws a servant to itself. Then through his sincerity, the servant approaches close to God Almighty and in prayer that relationship, when it arrives at a certain stage, manifests its wonderful qualities. When a servant being confronted with a great difficulty leans towards God Almighty with perfect certainty, perfect hope, perfect love, perfect fidelity and perfect resolve, and becoming extremely alert and tearing aside the veils of heedlessness advances far into the fields of the discarding of self, he beholds in front of him the court of the Divine and that He has no associate. Then his soul prostrates itself at that threshold and the power of attraction that is invested in him draws the bounty of God Almighty towards itself. Then God, the Glorious, addresses Himself towards fulfilling the purpose of the supplication and casts the effect of prayer on all those preliminary means which give rise to the means that are necessary for the achievement of the purpose of the prayer.” [*Barakātud-Du'ā*, p. 9-10; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 192-193]

Enumerating the conditions that are necessary for the acceptance of prayer, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> adds:

“Humility alone is not enough for prayer, but righteousness, purity, truthfulness, perfect certainty, perfect love and perfect attention are all needed. It is also necessary that the object prayed for should not be opposed to the Divine design for the welfare in this world and in the hereafter of the supplicant, or of the one on whose behalf supplication is made. Very often, despite all other conditions being fulfilled, the object for which supplication is made is opposed to the Divine design and there is no good in its fulfilment.” [*Barakātud-Du‘ā*, p. 5-14; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 197]

Since prayer may not be responded to immediately, many supplicants lose heart in their beseeching and give up prematurely. Commenting on this lack of persistency by the supplicant, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> mentions in his *Malḡūzāt*:

“Prayer is a wonderful thing. It is a pity that those who pray are not aware of the true manner of prayer, nor are they acquainted with the ways of the acceptance of prayer. The truth is that the very reality of prayer has become strange. There are some who deny the effectiveness of prayer altogether. There are others who do not deny it, but as their prayers are not accepted on account of their lack of knowledge of the manner of prayer and are not prayers in the true sense, their condition is worse than that of those who deny the effectiveness of prayer. Their practical condition has pushed many others to the verge of atheism. The first condition for prayer is that a supplicant should not get tired and become a prey to despair that nothing will happen. Sometimes it is seen that a prayer is carried on till it is about to be accepted and then the supplicant gets tired and the result is failure and frustration. Frustration results in the denial and effectiveness of prayer and gradually culminates in the denial of God. It is said if there is God Who accepts prayer why have not those prayers been accepted which were offered over a long period? If those who think thus and stumble were to reflect upon their lack of perseverance, they would come to know that all their frustration is the result of their own haste and impatience, which generated an ill concept of the powers of God and resulted in despair. So one should never get tired.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 4, p. 415-430; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 199-200]

The act of prayer does not mean that one gives up planning and use of worldly means to achieve one's objectives. According to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, the two methods of striving go hand in hand. As he writes in his book, *Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*:

“As the relationship between planning and prayer is proved by the law of nature, it is also proved by the testimony of the book of nature. It is often observed that as human temperaments at a time of distress incline towards planning and remedies, in the same way they incline by natural eagerness towards prayer and almsgiving and charity.... This is a spiritual argument that the inner law of man has, from the beginning, directed all peoples that they should not separate prayer from means and planning, but should search for plans with prayer. In short, prayer and planning are two natural demands of human nature which, ever since the creation of man, have been the servants of human nature like two real brothers. Planning is the necessary consequence of prayer and prayer incites towards planning. The good fortune of man consists in this, that before entering upon planning he should seek help through prayer from the Fountainhead of grace so that being granted light from this ever-flowing spring good plans should be made available to him.” [*Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 14, pp. 231-232; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 207]

According to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, wisdom gained by man is also through the process of earnest weeping and prayer. As he writes in *Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*:

“When our soul in search for something, extends its hand with great earnestness and weeping towards the Fountainhead of grace, and, finding itself helpless, seeks light from somewhere through its reflection, this condition too is like a condition of prayer. All wisdoms have been manifested through such prayer and the key of every house of knowledge is prayer. No knowledge or insight is manifested without it. Our thinking, our reflection and our search for the hidden objective are all parts of prayer. The only difference is that the prayer of those who possess insight depends upon the manners of insight, and their soul recognizing the Fountainhead of grace extends its hand towards it with insight.” [*Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 14, pp. 230; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 206]

Many persons become disappointed and discouraged when a prayer is not accepted promptly by God. Commenting on this situation the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

“During the interval between a supplication and its acceptance one is often subjected to trial after trial, some of which are back-breaking. A persevering and good-natured supplicant smells the perfume of the favours of his Lord in these trials and difficulties and his intelligence informs him that they will be followed by help. One aspect of these trials is that they foster eagerness for prayer. The greater the distress of the supplicant, the more his soul will be melted. This is one of the factors in the acceptance of prayer. So one should not lose heart and should not think ill of God through impatience and restlessness. One should never think that one’s prayer is not accepted or will not be accepted. Such a notion is a denial of the attribute of God that He accepts prayers.” [Malfūzāt, vol. IV, pp. 434; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 222]

### **Salāt or Ritual Prayer**

The performing of the *Ṣalāt* was the first duty enjoined upon the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the establishment of congregational Prayer is one of the most frequently repeated injunctions in the Holy Qur’an.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

And observe **Prayer** and pay the Zakāt, and bow down with those who bow. (2:44)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

O ye who believe! seek help with patience and **Prayer**; surely, Allah is with the steadfast. (2:154)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا ۚ

O ye who believe! approach not **Prayer** while you are mentally dazed till you clearly know what you say, nor when you are unclean, except when you are travelling along a way, until you have bathed. (4:44)

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

Say, “My **Prayer** and my sacrifice and my life and my death are *all* for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.” (6:163)

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا ۖ

And enjoin **Prayer** on thy people, and be constant therein... (20:133)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

O ye who believe! bow down and prostrate yourselves in **Prayer**, and worship your Lord, and do good deeds that you may prosper. (22:78)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٣﴾

Surely, success does come to the believers,  
Who are humble in their **Prayers**, (23:2-3)

وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشَاءِ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٦﴾

And glorify thy Lord with His praise in the evening and in the morning. (40:56)

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دُخْرَيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾

And your Lord says, “**Pray** unto Me; I will answer your *prayer*. But those who are too proud to worship Me will surely enter Hell, despised.” (40:61)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٥﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾

Verily, he *truly* prospers who purifies himself,  
And remembers the name of his Lord and offers **Prayers**. (87:15-16)

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۖ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ ۖ وَيَسْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ۝

So woe to those who **pray**,  
But are unmindful of their **Prayer**.  
Those who show off,  
And they deprive people of even small benefits. (107:5-8)

In Islam, no one day is set aside exclusively for Prayer such as the Sabbath (Saturday) for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians. For Muslims, Prayer is made a part of everyday life. There is a *Ṣalāt* in the morning before sunrise; another just after midday; a third one late in the afternoon; a fourth soon after sunset; and a fifth later in the evening.

The Muslims are enjoined to offer all Daily Prayers in congregation as far as possible. On every Friday, there is a special congregational Prayer called the *Jumu'a* Prayer which is performed in place of the daily noon Prayer. This Prayer also includes a sermon before the Prayer.

During their Prayers, the Muslims are enjoined to face the Ka'ba in Mecca—the Sacred Mosque whose foundations were raised by the Prophets Abraham<sup>as</sup> and Ishmael<sup>as</sup>. This unity of the Muslims makes the Ka'ba appear like the hub of a giant wheel with its spokes running across the globe.

While the *Ṣalāt* is offered in the Arabic language, one may supplicate within the *Ṣalāt* in one's own vernacular.

The *Ṣalāt* has well defined postures that include: standing, bowing, sitting and prostration. Commenting on the philosophy of these postures, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“My experience is that nothing takes one so near to God as *Salat*. The various postures of the *Salat* demonstrate respect, humility and meekness. In *Qiyam* (standing posture) the worshipper stands with his arms folded as a slave stands respectfully before his master and king. In *Ruku'* (bowing) the worshipper bends down in humility. The climax of humility is reached in *Sajdah* (prostration), which indicates extreme helplessness.” [Speeches to Jalsah Sālāna,

1906, pp. 6-8; *Malfūzāt*, vol. 9, p. 110; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 297 ]

The *Ṣalāt* needs to be performed with full attention, sincerity and lack of hurry. In this context, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says in the *Malfūzāt*:

“It is folly to be satisfied with the outward performance of *Salat*. Most people observe the *Salat* only formally and get through it quickly as if it were a burdensome tax which should be got rid of speedily. Then there are those who get through the *Salat* quickly and thereafter occupy themselves with long drawn out prayers which take twice or three times as much time as the *Salat*, whereas the *Salat* itself is nothing but prayer. He who does not observe it in that spirit and does not occupy himself with supplication in the course of it fails to observe the *Salat*. You should seek to make your *Salat* delicious like food and cold water, lest it should bring woe upon you rather than blessing. *Salat* is an obligation due to God. It should be carried out in an excellent manner.” [*Malfūzāt*, vol. VI, p. 370; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 303]

The *Ṣalāt* is in fact a striving undertaken to seek God’s pleasure and forgiveness. Like any striving or exercise in life, it may be considered onerous by the performer. Again, like any exercise, the full benefit of *Ṣalāt* may not be evident the very first time and requires patience and constancy. Commenting on this aspect of *Ṣalāt*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes:

“What is *Salat*? It is a supplication addressed to the Lord of Honour without which a person cannot be truly alive, nor can he procure any means of security and happiness. When God Almighty bestows this grace upon a person it is only then that he obtains true comfort. From that moment, he will begin to feel pleasure and delight in *Salat*. As he derives pleasure from delicious food, he will begin to derive pleasure from his weeping and crying in *Salat*. Before he experiences that condition in his *Salat*, it is necessary that he should persist in *Salat* as he swallows bitter medicine so that he may be restored to health. In the same way, it is necessary for him to persist in *Salat* and in making his supplications while he derives no pleasure from them. In such condition, he should seek pleasure and delight in *Salat* with the supplication:

‘Allah! Thou knowest how blind and sightless I am, and at the moment I



am like the dead. I know that in a little while, I shall be called and shall present myself before Thee and no one will be able to stop me. But my heart is blind and unenlightened. Do Thou cause to descend upon it such a flame of light that thereby it may be inspired with Thy love and devotion to Thee. Do Thou bestow upon me such grace that I shall not be raised up sightless nor join the blind.’

When he supplicates in this manner and persists in the supplication, he will see that a time will arrive when something will descend upon him while he is engaged in such type of prayer which will melt his heart.” [*Malfūzāt*, vol. IV, pp. 321-322; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 297-298]

The true philosophy of Prayer is multi-faceted and complex. Many persons fail to understand it or appreciate it fully. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> explains it in his book *Ḥaqīqatul-Wahī*, as follows:

“Man boasts to worship God, but can worship be done merely by an abundance of prostration, bowing, and standing? Or can those who keep rotating the beads of a rosary many a time be called worshippers of the Divine? Rather, worship can [only] be done by the one whom the love of God draws towards Himself to such a degree that his own self is removed from in between. To begin with, there should be firm conviction in the existence of God, and then there should be a full acquaintance of God’s beauty and beneficence, and then there should be such a bond of love with Him that the flame of love should be ever present in the bosom, and this ecstasy should be evident upon the face at every moment. God’s greatness should be [so firmly planted] in the heart that the whole world appears dead in front of His being, and every fear should be only related to His being. Pleasure should exist only in the pain [endured] for Him, and comfort should exist only in seclusion with Him, and without Him, the heart should find no tranquillity with anyone. If such a state is realized, this is what is called ‘worship’, but how can this state develop without the special help of God Almighty? That is why God Almighty has taught this supplication:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَ إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ [Holy Qur’an, 1:5]

Meaning that, we do worship You, but how can we give worship its full due until there is special help from You.

To worship God, having made Him one's True Beloved, is the sainthood beyond which there is no rank, but this rank cannot be achieved without His help. The hallmark of having achieved it is that God's greatness and God's love should be established in the heart, and the heart should trust Him alone; and he should prefer Him alone, he should choose Him above everything, and consider His remembrance to be the [sole] purpose of his life." [*Haqīqatul-Wahī*, p. 66-67, Islam International Publications Ltd., on-line English edition]

### **Reasons for Obligatory Prayers**

Commenting on the reasons why Prayers have been made obligatory upon man, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*:

"It is also worthy of note that the prayer which has been made obligatory upon Muslims in the Holy Word of God has been prescribed for four reasons:

- (1) The first is, so that by turning to God Almighty at every time and in every condition, one should be firmly established on the Unity of God, inasmuch as supplicating Him is to acknowledge that God alone bestows one's objective upon one.
- 2) The second is, that faith might be strengthened by the acceptance of prayer and the achievement of the objective.
- (3) The third is, that if Divine favour is bestowed in any other way, knowledge and wisdom might be increased.
- (4) The fourth is, that if one is informed of the acceptance of prayer through a vision or revelation which is fulfilled, the understanding of the Divine might be promoted and understanding might grow into certainty and certainty into love and through love there might be deliverance from every sin and a cutting asunder from everything beside God, which is the fruit of true salvation."

[*Ayyām-uṣ-Ṣulḥ*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 14, p. 242; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 210]

### **3. FASTING (ṢAUM)**

The third act of worship in Islam is fasting during the Islamic month of Ramaḍān by all able, adult Muslims. The Arabic word for fasting, *Ṣaum*, is derived from the root *sam* which means abstaining or refraining. The fasting

begins before daybreak and continues until sunset. During this period, a Muslim abstains from all food, drinks, conjugal relations, vulgar speech and foul acts. Fasting in some form or another has been practised by almost all religions:

- The Buddhists observe fast during times of intensive meditation.
- The Hindus practise fasting in a variety of forms and on a number of occasions that suit the observer. A fast is usually kept from sunset to sunrise the next morning.
- The Jains also observe fast from sunset to sunrise the next morning. Fasts are kept singly, on ten consecutive days, or for an entire month.
- The Sikhs do not keep fasts on religious basis, as it has no spiritual benefit according to them. They may, however, keep fasts purely for health reason.
- The Taoists keep fasts by abstaining from certain foods or consuming any kind of food.
- The Jews also fast for six days of the year from sunset to sunset, and for four days of the year from sunrise to sunset. Fasts are also kept on other days and to seek repentance. The Old Testament refers to many prophets keeping fasts such as: Moses, David, Joel, Jonah and Isaiah.
- The Christians observe fasts according to the denomination to which they belong. The fasts of Lent observed by the Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox followers are for forty days to commemorate the fast observed by Jesus Christ during the temptation in the desert. In these fasts, one abstains from a particular item or items such as meat, milk, or certain delicacies. The purpose of fasting in Christianity is not to suffer but to guard against gluttony

and impure thoughts, speech and deeds. Fasting should also be accompanied by increased prayers and alms giving. Some Christian denominations also keep fasts other than the Lent on certain days during the year. In the Protestant churches, fasting is left to the discretion of the individual and there are generally no church edicts in this matter. Thus, fasting is generally less popular among the Protestants.

The Islamic concept of fasting is described in the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۖ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۗ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۚ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

“O ye who believe! **fasting** is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.

*The prescribed **fasting** is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall **fast** the same number of other days; and for those who are able to **fast** only with great difficulty is an expiation—the feed-*

ing of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And **fasting** is good for you, if you only knew.

The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present *at home* in this month, let him **fast** therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey *shall fast* the same number of other days. Allah desires *to give* you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful." (2:184-186)

Commenting on the philosophy of fasting expressed in the above verses, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states:

"This verse indicates the greatness of the month of Ramadan. The *Sufis* have recorded that this is a good month for the illumination of the heart. One who observes the fast has frequent experience of visions in this month. The *Salat* purifies the spirit and the fast illumines the heart. The purification of the spirit means that one may be delivered from the passions of the self that incites to evil; and the illumination of the heart means that the gates of vision may be opened so that one may be able to behold God." [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. IV, p. 256; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 313]

And again:

"To be moderate in eating and drinking and to bear hunger and thirst are necessary for the purification of the spirit and promote the capacity for visions. Man does not live by bread alone. To discard all thought of eternal life is to invite Divine wrath.

It should be remembered that the fast does not mean merely that a person should abstain from food and drink over a certain period. During the fast one should be occupied greatly with the remembrance of God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) occupied himself greatly with worship during the month of Ramadan. During that month, one should discard one's preoccupation with eating and drinking; and cutting asunder from these needs should address oneself wholly towards God. Unfortunate is the person who is bestowed material bread and pays no attention to spiritual bread. Material bread strengthens the body, and spiritual bread sustains the soul and sharpens the spiritual faculties. Seek the grace of God, as all doors are opened by

His grace.” [Speech at the Annual Conference, 1906, p. 20-21; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 316]

The purpose of fasting in Islam is summarised below:

- By fasting, a Muslim obeys the command of God which is a justification in itself;
- Fasting is a mini sacrifice of one’s physical needs and makes one feel better spiritually;
- Experience shows that other worships like *du’a* and *Ṣalāt* are more enjoyable and spiritually more beneficial, when one is fasting;
- It is during a fast that we find out how the hungry and poor people in this world really feel;
- On medical grounds as well, fasting is an excellent activity and a good training for the body.

Persons who are either sick or on a journey, are exempted from the fasts of Ramaḍān. They must, however, make up these missed fasts at another time. Those people who are chronically ill or too old to keep fasts are allowed to feed a poor man for every fast that they miss.

Muslims, who are not exempted as mentioned above, are required to fast for 29 or 30 days of the month of Ramaḍān—the exact number of the days depends on the appearance of the new moon. Fasting starts with the sighting of the new moon of Ramaḍān and ends with the appearance of the new moon of Shawwāl.

Aside from the obligatory fasts of the month of Ramaḍān, a Muslim may keep voluntary fasts at any time he wishes as long as these fasts do not interfere with his or her normal duties or fall on the festive day of ‘Īd or on a Friday.

#### 4. ZAKĀT OR PRESCRIBED ALMS

Charity towards man, in the widest sense of the word, is the cornerstone of the Islamic society and a constant theme in the Qur'anic teachings. There are two kinds of charities in Islam: the obligatory and the voluntary. The obligatory charity is called *Zakāt* while the voluntary charity is called *Ṣadaqa*.

The Arabic word *Zakāt* is derived from the root *zka*, which means purification. The concept of *Zakāt* was not completely new to Islam; similar almsgiving had been enjoined upon the Israelites and the Christians as well. In Islam, the *Zakāt* takes the form of a prescribed contribution based on a person's wealth and income. The rate of contribution varies with the kind of property owned but on an average, works out to two and one half percent of the total value. According to the philosophy expressed in verse 9:60, the proceeds of *Zakāt* are supposed to be spent towards:

- Relieving poverty and distress
- Helping those in debt
- Providing comfort and convenience for travellers
- Providing stipends for scholarships
- Providing ransom for prisoners of war
- Propagation of Islam
- Meeting the expenses for the collection of *Zakāt*
- Other things beneficial for the society

*Zakāt*, therefore, is a duty enjoined by God in the interest of the society as a whole. While on one hand these charitable contributions provide for the needs of the society, on the other hand the act of giving in the name of God purifies the heart of the contributor from selfishness and greed.

Along with the establishment of the Prayer, the paying of *Zakāt* is a frequently mentioned commandment in the Holy Qur'an:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ۖ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١١﴾

And observe Prayer and pay the **Zakāt**; and whatever good you send on before you for yourselves, you shall find with Allah; surely, Allah sees all that you do. (2:111)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى ۚ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِيقًا  
 النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ

O ye who believe! render not vain your **alms** by taunt and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men, and he believes not in Allah and the Last Day... (2:265)

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعَبًا هِيَ ۚ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَ  
 يُكْفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

If you give **alms** openly, it is well and good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you; and He will remove from you many of your sins. And Allah is aware of what you do. (2:272)

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ  
 الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيَاهُمْ ۚ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۚ وَمَا  
 تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾

These **alms** are for the poor who are detained in the cause of Allah and are unable to move about in the land. The ignorant man thinks them to be free from want because of *their abstaining from begging*. Thou shalt know them by their appearance; they do not beg of men with importunity. And whatever of



wealth you spend, surely, Allah has perfect knowledge thereof. (2:274)

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَ الْمَسْكِينِ وَ الْعَبْدِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَ الْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ فِي  
الرِّقَابِ وَ الْغَرَمِينَ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ  
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

The **alms** are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the *freeing of slaves*, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer—an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. (9:60)

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَ تُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

Take **alms** out of their wealth, so that thou mayest cleanse them and purify them thereby. (9:103)

وَمَا آتَيْتُم مِّن رَّبٍّ لَّيِّبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُؤْا عِندَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَ مَا آتَيْتُم مِّنْ  
زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضَعِفُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Whatever you pay as interest that it may increase the wealth of the people, it does not increase in the sight of Allah; but whatever you give in **Zakāt** seeking the favour of Allah—it is these who will increase *their wealth* manifold. (30:40)

Mentioning the philosophy of Zakāt, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states in a speech:

“Another form of worship is **Zakāt**. Some people pay the *Zakāt* but take no care whether that which they pay as *Zakāt* was lawfully or was unlawfully acquired.... The root of the word *Zakāt* means purification. When a person who acquires something lawfully and out of it spends in the cause of the faith, the

rest of it is purified. Many people are involved in these errors and they do not recognize the reality. All this must be discarded. All the ordinances of Islam are means of salvation, but through their errors, people go astray. One should not take pride in one's good actions, nor be pleased with them until such sincere faith is achieved that no one is associated in one's worship of God Almighty and one is enabled to worship righteousness all the time." [Speeches to Jalsah Sālāna, 1906, pp. 20-21; *Malfūzāt*, vol. 9, p. 124-125; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol.2, p. 317-318]

## 5. HAJJ OR PILGRIMAGE

The last formalised act of Islamic worship is the performing of the Hajj or the Pilgrimage to Mecca. The Arabic word Hajj is derived from the root *hajja* which means to betake oneself to an object of reverence. A Muslim is obligated to perform this pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime if economic, political and security conditions are favourable. The focal point of this pilgrimage is the Ka'ba, whose foundations were raised by the Prophet Abraham<sup>as</sup> some 4,000 years ago. Today, the Ka'ba stands in the middle of a large courtyard of *Masjid-al-Harām* or the Sacred Mosque. The courtyard of *Masjid-al-Harām* contains, besides the Ka'ba, the *Maqām-e-Ibrahim*—the Station of Abraham—and the fountain of Zamzam.



Ka'ba inside the courtyard of the Sacred Mosque at Mecca (Courtesy AFP)

With respect to Hajj, the Holy Qur'an mentions the following:

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا ۖ وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَ  
عَهْدَنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

And remember the time when We made the House a resort for mankind

and a place of security; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of Prayer. And We commanded Abraham and Ishmael, saying, "Purify My House for those who perform the circuit and those who remain *therein* for devotion and those who bow down and fall prostrate in Prayer." (2:126)

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾

And remember the time when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House, praying, "Our Lord, accept *this* from us; for Thou art All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (2:128)

وَاتَّبَعُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى  
يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِّن رَّأْسِهِ فَغَدِيَّةٌ مِّنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ  
أَوْ نُسْكِ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَبَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ  
فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ  
حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٢٩﴾  
الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَةٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا  
تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٣٠﴾  
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَقَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ  
الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوا كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَبِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٣١﴾  
ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٣٢﴾  
فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا

And complete the **Hajj** and the ‘Umrah for the sake of Allah: but if you are kept back, then *make* whatever offering is easily available; and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. And whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, *should make* an expiation either by fasting or almsgiving or a sacrifice. But when you are safe, then he, who would avail himself of the ‘Umrah together with the **Hajj**, *should make* whatever offering is easily obtainable. But such *of you* as cannot find *an offering* should fast three days during the Pilgrimage, and seven when you return home; these are ten complete. This is for him whose family does not reside near the Sacred Mosque. And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in punishing.

The months of the **Hajj** are well known; so whoever determines to perform the Pilgrimage in these months, *should remember that* there is *to be* no foul talk, nor any transgression, nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And furnish yourselves with *necessary* provisions, and surely, the best provision is righteousness. And fear Me *alone*, O men of understanding.

It is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your Lord. But when you pour forth from ‘Arafat, remember Allah at *Masha‘arul-Harām*; and remember Him as He has guided you, although, before this, you were those gone astray.

Then pour forth from where the people pour forth, and seek forgiveness from Allah; surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

And when you have performed the acts of worship prescribed for you, celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers, or even more than that... (2:197-201)

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ  
فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لَبِئْسَ أَتَقَىٰ

And remember Allah during the appointed number of days; but whoso hastens *to leave* in two days, it shall be no sin for him; and whoso stays behind, it shall be no sin for him. *This is* for him who fears God. (2:204)

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبْرَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾  
فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۖ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ  
الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

Surely, the first House founded for mankind is that at Becca<sup>11</sup>, abounding in blessings and a guidance for all peoples.

In it are manifest Signs; it is the place of Abraham; and whoso enters it, enters peace. And **pilgrimage** to the House is a duty which men—those who can find a way thither—owe to Allah... (3:97-98)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهُدًى وَلَا  
الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۖ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ  
فَاصْطَادُوا ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن  
تَعْتَدُوا ۗ

O ye who believe! profane none of the things sanctified by Allah, nor the Sacred Month, nor the animals brought as an offering, nor the *animals of sacrifice* wearing collars, nor those repairing to the Sacred House, seeking grace from their Lord, and *His* pleasure. And when you put off the pilgrims' garb and are clear of the Sacred Territory, you may hunt. And let not the enmity of a people, that they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque, incite you to transgress... (5:3)

<sup>11</sup> "Becca" is the valley where Mecca is located.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۖ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا  
فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَدِئًا الْكَعْبَةُ أَوْ  
كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ عَدْلُ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِّيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهٖ ۗ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا  
سَلَفَ ۚ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمِ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٩٦﴾

O ye who believe! kill not game while you are in a state of pilgrimage. And whoso amongst you kills it intentionally, its compensation is a quadruped like unto that which he has killed, as determined by two just men from among you, *the same* to be brought as an offering to the Ka'ba; or as an expiation *he shall have* to feed a number of poor persons, or fast an equivalent number of days, so that he may taste the penalty of his deed. *As for* the past, Allah forgives it; but whoso reverts to it, Allah will punish him *for his offence*. And Allah is Mighty, Lord of retribution. (5:96)

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَمًا لِّلنَّاسِ وَ الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَ الْهَدْيَ وَ  
الْقَلَائِدَ ۖ

Allah has made the Ka'ba, the inviolable House, as a means of support and uplift for mankind, as also the Sacred Month and the offerings and the *animals with collars*<sup>12</sup>... (5:98)

وَ إِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَن لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَ طَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَ  
الْقَائِمِينَ وَ الرُّكْعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿٩٧﴾  
وَ أَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

<sup>12</sup> Meaning sacrificial animals wearing the collars.



لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَةٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنْ  
بِهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ﴿٢٩﴾  
ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نَذْرَهُمْ وَيُطِيفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٣٠﴾

And remember the time when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House and said, “Associate not anything with Me, and keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down and fall prostrate in Prayers;

And proclaim unto mankind the **Pilgrimage**. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track,

That they may witness *its* benefits for them and may mention the name of Allah, during the appointed days, over the quadrupeds of *the class of* cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed, the needy.

Then let them accomplish the task of cleansing themselves, and fulfil their vows, and go around the Ancient House. (22:27-30)

The Hajj is performed during the Muslim month of Dhul Hijjah, which comes two months after the festival of ‘Id-al Fiṭr. The various ceremonies of the Hajj are given below:

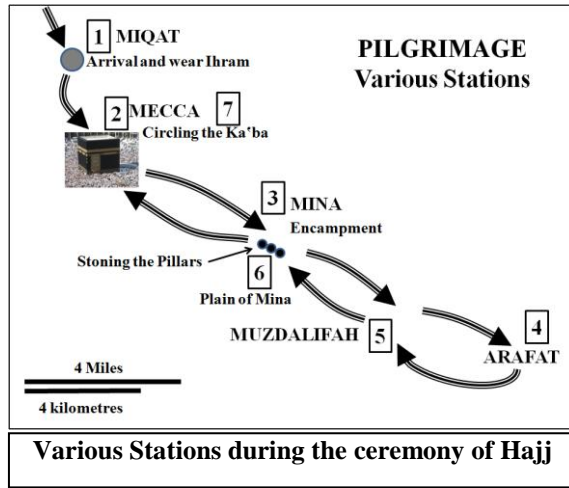
(1) Entering into the state of *iḥrām* by wearing only two seamless white sheets. This is done by the pilgrims when they reach certain designated places close to Mecca known as *Miqāt*.

(2) Saying of *talbiyah* starting at the place where the *iḥrām* is worn. *Talbiyah* consists of saying aloud the following:

“Here we come, O God, here we come;  
No partner have You, here we come;  
Indeed, praise and blessings are Yours, and the Kingdom too;  
No partner have You, here we come.”

(3) On entering Mecca, the pilgrims perform the first *ṭawāf* or circuits which consist of going around the Ka'ba seven times in an anticlockwise direction.

(4) After completing the *ṭawāf*, the pilgrims perform the *sa'ī* which consists of walking briskly between the two little hills of Safa and Marwa located near the Ka'ba. These are the two hills where Hajra (Hagar) ran in search of water when her husband, Abraham<sup>as</sup>, had to leave her there on Divine command.



(5) After performing the *sa'ī*, the pilgrims move to Mina, a plain located about four miles east of Mecca, and spend the night there.

(6) Next morning, the pilgrims leave for the Plain of Arafat located nine miles southeast of Mecca. They arrive there in the early afternoon, say the combined *Zuhr* and '*Aṣr* Prayers and listen to a sermon given by the Imam. The pilgrims stay in the Plain of Arafat only till sunset. This is the same plain where the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> delivered his farewell sermon.

(7) After sunset, the pilgrims leave Arafat and come to a place called Muzdalifah. In the Holy Qur'an, this place is referred to as *al Mash'ar-ul-Ḥarām*, the Sacred Monument. On reaching Muzdalifah, the pilgrims say their combined *Maghrib* and '*Ishā' Prayers and spend the night there. In the morning, after saying the *Fajr* Prayer, the pilgrims return to Mina once again.*

(8) The pilgrims reach Mina on the tenth day of Dhul Hijjah. This is the busiest day of the pilgrimage. The first ceremony that is performed at Mina



is the throwing of small stones or *rami al-jimār* in which the pilgrims throw stones at three pillars in a symbolic act of striking the devil.

(9) The tenth day of Dhul Hijjah is also the day when pilgrims sacrifice their animals. This day is also celebrated all over the Muslim world as the festive day of 'Id-al Adha.

(10) After performing the sacrifice the pilgrims have their heads shaved or their hair clipped. After this they emerge from the state of ihram by wearing their everyday clothes.

(11) Clad in their everyday clothes the pilgrims perform another *tawaf* (circuits) of the Ka'ba. This tawaf is called *ṭawāf-i ziārat*.

(12) Before the tenth day of Dhul Hijjah ends, the pilgrims perform another *sa'ī* between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

(13) After this the pilgrims return once again to Mina where they stay until the twelfth or thirteenth day of Dhul Hijjah. During these two or three days the pilgrims continue to perform the ceremony of *rami al jimār* or throwing of stones.

(14) On the afternoon of the twelfth Dhul Hijjah (or of the thirteenth) the pilgrims return to Mecca for the last ceremony of the pilgrimage. This ceremony consists of the farewell *ṭawāf* (circuits) of the Ka'ba after which the entire pilgrimage is completed and the pilgrims are free to leave anytime.

While the Hajj may only be performed during the prescribed dates of the month of Dhul Hijjah, a Lesser Pilgrimage called *'Umrā* may be made individually at any time during the year.

Commenting on the philosophy of Hajj, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

“Another form of worship is *Hajj*—the Pilgrimage; which does not mean that a person should carry out the formality of the Pilgrimage by providing for his journey across the ocean with money lawfully or unlawfully acquired, and

having repeated the prayers and formulas according to the directions of the servitors of the *Ka'bah*, should come back and boast that he has performed the Pilgrimage. The purpose that God Almighty has appointed for the Pilgrimage is not achieved in this manner. The truth is that the last stage of the seeker's journey is that withdrawing himself altogether from the demands and desires of self he should be completely engulfed by the love of God and complete devotion to Him. A true lover sacrifices his soul and heart; and the circuit of the House of Allah is a visible sign of such a sacrifice. As there is a House of Allah here below on the earth, so there is one in heaven. Until a person performs the circuit of the House above, his circuit of the House below is not truly performed. One who performs the circuit of the House below puts aside all garments, retaining only one of them to cover his body, but he who performs the circuit of the House above discards all garments altogether and becomes naked for the sake of God. The circuit is a sign of the lovers of God. They go round the *Ka'ba* as if they have no will of their own left and they are devoted wholly to Him." [Speech at the Annual Conference, 1906, p. 20-21; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 317]

## REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

Beside the ritual worships described above, Muslims are also exhorted in the Holy Qur'an to carry out remembrance of God. This remembrance can be carried out any time and preferably all the time. The heart of a Muslim should always be inclined towards God, irrespective of what activity he or she may be engaged in. Remembrance of God may include non-ritual remembrance in the form of silent prayers, meditation and what is termed *Dhikr*<sup>13</sup>. Remembrance of God is also a mindset under which the Person of God is always present in one's mind at all times—during walking, working, waking and sleep.

The Holy Qur'an exhorts the believer with respect to the remembrance of God in the following words:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٣٢﴾

Therefore **remember** Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me

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<sup>13</sup> Short prayers or phrases that are repeatedly recited, usually silently.

and do not be ungrateful to Me. (2:153)

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَ  
لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

And **remember** thy Lord in thy mind with humility and fear, and without loudness of speech, in the mornings and evenings; and be not of the neglectful. (7:206)

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٦﴾

Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the **remembrance** of Allah. Aye! it is in the **remembrance** of Allah that hearts can find comfort; (13:29)

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ

And **remembrance** of Allah indeed is the greatest *virtue*... (29:46)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٢﴾  
وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٣٣﴾

O ye who believe! **remember** Allah with much remembrance;  
And glorify Him morning and evening. (33:42-43)

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۖ

Has not the time arrived for those who believe that their hearts should feel humbled at the **remembrance** of Allah and at the truth which has come down to them... (57:17)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

O ye who believe! let not your wealth and your children divert you from the **remembrance** of Allah. And whoever does so—it is they who are the losers. (63:10)

وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٦١﴾

So **remember** the name of thy Lord, and devote *thyself* to Him with full devotion. (73:9)

وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

And **remember** the name of thy Lord morning and evening. (76:26)

In the context of the remembrance of Allah, the following Hadith is relevant:

" لَا تُكْثِرُوا الْكَلَامَ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الْكَلَامِ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ قَسْوَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ وَإِنَّ أْبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْقَلْبُ الْقَاسِي "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Do not talk too much without remembrance of Allah. Indeed excessive talking without remembrance of Allah hardens the heart. And indeed the furthest of people from Allah is the harsh-hearted." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 36, Hadith 109*

## DO WE HAVE ANY RIGHTS OVER GOD?

After we have discussed in some detail the various rights that God has upon us, a question naturally arises whether we, too, have any rights on the Person of God. Are there any privileges that we must be given or

are there any obligations with respect to us that God must fulfil? This subject is taken up by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> in his book *Chashma'-e Ma'rifat* where he writes:

“It should be borne in mind that Master is the word which does not admit of any rights, and this expression can be applied in its fullness only to God for He alone is the Perfect Master. A person who accepts another as the Master of his life etc. confesses that he has no right to his life and property and that he owns nothing and everything belongs to the Master. In such a case, it is not permissible for him to demand from his Master that justice should be done to him in such and such a matter because justice depends upon right and he has given up all his rights. In the same way, man who in juxtaposition to his True Master accepted his own status as that of servant and confessed:

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

That is to say: Our belonging, life, body and progeny are all the property of God. After this confession there remains no right which he can demand from God.” [*Chashma'-e-Ma'rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 23, pp. 23; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 125-126]

While God cannot be truly *obligated* to undertake any action, it does not mean that His actions are completely arbitrary, capricious or given solely to Lordly whims. God has created this universe on the principle of justice and His actions are based on the requirements of truth—although frequently we humans fail to comprehend the wisdom or rationality behind them. In life, one frequently encounters tragic incidents—to one's own self or to others—which *seem* to contradict the notion that God is Merciful and Just. At such moments, we wish that they were carried out according to what *we* desire and seem to question the wisdom of God. Islam's answer to such moments of doubt is to invoke trust in God as the All-Knower and the All-Wise.

## *Chapter 2*

# OBLIGATIONS TO MANKIND

### [*Huqūq-ul ‘Ībād*—the Rights of Men]

## INTRODUCTION

There are some animals in the world that live a solitary life. Most common among these include bears, black rhinoceros, pandas, leopards, sloths and wolverines, to name a few. Opposed to this solitary lifestyle is the existence of most animals that live in groups, herds, flocks, shoals and colonies. As Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>th</sup> describes in his book *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth*,<sup>14</sup> the collective living of these animals affords them innumerable benefits although they do sacrifice their individual freedom to some extent. The long-term success of such social relations is based on the principle of give-and-take. The individual gives support and help to the social order while, at the same time, obtaining certain advantages which otherwise may not be available in solitary living. Some communal animals—such as ants and bees—have developed an extremely sophisticated social structure and behaviour within their colonies.

Studies in anthropology suggest that human society underwent a remarkable change when it shifted from small bands of foragers and hunter-gatherers to large, agriculture-based communities. Such large social orders afforded better protection to children, women and ailing individuals who otherwise would find it difficult to maintain solitary or nomadic existence. While such communal living proved beneficial in the end, it did impose certain obligations upon the individuals to act, not only in their own best interest, but also in the best interest of the society as a whole. If a conflict ever arose between these two requirements, the individual was expected and encouraged to sacrifice the personal benefit for the sake of the much larger social order.

The presence of large cities, farms and factories is a testament to the

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<sup>14</sup> Chapter on Individual versus Society, p. 11-17.

level of progress humans have achieved through their communal living in a relatively short period. Much like other animal communities, we have developed individual specialisation of tasks and forged bonds with other members of our society. Such bonds begin with the individual's own family and extend, not only to relatives and friends, but also to other members who are unrelated or unknown to the individual. In such complex social orders, rules and regulations need to exist which would allow us to act in a consistent and sensible manner for the well-being of all individuals concerned.

While social ordering in lower creatures is based on what biologists call instinct, such behaviour in our own human society owes much to the wilful imposition of guidelines, instructions and controls given by the great religions of the world that have existed for the past several millennia. The requirement for maintaining a harmonious society and the necessity to serve the best interests of the public at large meant that every individual behaved in a certain way.

Coming in the world as humanity's last major religion, Islam has retained all that was good in previous teachings, corrected what had become distorted over time, and provided new guidelines where they were needed in the present age. Islam reminds the individual that one is part of a social group. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into clans and tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you... (49:14)

Islam has placed people's duties to fellow human beings next to their obligations to the Creator. In fact, Islamic scholars have debated the relative importance of these two obligations and truly wondered as to which one is more important in the sight of God.

One fundamental aspect of human fellowship is worded in the Holy Qur'an as all believers being friends and brothers of each other:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْبَعْرِوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
الْبُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ  
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾

And believers, men and women, are **friends** one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is these on whom Allah will have mercy. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise. (9:71)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ

Surely *all* believers are **brothers**. So make peace between brothers... (49:11)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> writes that besides a religion's teachings about God, the second most important feature by which it can be considered a true faith is its teachings about human beings. In this context, he writes in his book, *Nasīm-e-Da'wat*, in the following words:

“It is necessary that a seeker after truth should inquire what does a religion teach with regard to his own self and with regard to human conduct. Is there anything in its teaching which would disrupt human relationships, or would draw a person into courses, which are inconsistent with modesty and honour, or would be contrary to the law of nature, or would be impossible to conform to or carry out, or make it dangerous to do so? It would also be necessary to see whether some important teaching needed to control disorderliness has been left out.” [*Naīm-e-Da'wat*, *Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 19, pp. 373-374; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 5]

Commenting on the Qur'anic verse 2:113 that talks about submitting completely to God, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> emphasises the point that devoting one's life to God demands that one devote one's life to the service of God's creatures:



“The second aspect of devoting one's life to the cause of God Almighty is that one's life should be devoted to the service of His creatures and to sympathy with them and to sharing their burdens and sorrows. One should suffer pain to bring them comfort, and one should experience grief to bring them consolation. [*A'ina-e-Kamalāt-e-Islam, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 5, p. 60; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 22]

Emphasising service to humanity, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

The service of one's fellow-beings means to strive for their benefit purely for the sake of God in all their needs, and in all the relationships of mutual dependence which God has established out of true and selfless sympathy for them. All in need of help should be helped out of one's God-given capacity and one must do his best for their betterment both in this world and in the hereafter. [*A'ina-e-Kamalāt-e-Islam, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 5, pp. 61- 62; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 23]

According to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the establishment of mutual sets of rights and obligations among human beings is a great mercy and blessing of God. In the absence of such well-defined rights and duties, mankind would fall into chaos and confusion. As he writes in this context:

“This is mercy for mankind and God Almighty has established this system of mutual rights between His creatures so that peace might be maintained and no group should trespass against another and thus create disorder. Thus all the punishments prescribed in the sphere of life, property, and honour are a mercy for mankind....” [*Kitāb-ul-Bariyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 13, pp. 73; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 130]

For the sake of systematic classification, the interpersonal rights or our duties to other people in society can be arranged into two categories:

(A) **Duties that relate to well-defined groups** such as: children, parents, relatives, orphans, needy, neighbours, wayfarer, prisoners of war, women, spouse, and the officials.

(B) **Duties that relate to general public** and which have been man-

dated in Islam for the purpose of harmonious functioning of the society at large. Such duties that are not specific towards any well defined sector of our communities include: correct testimony, truthfulness, honesty, fulfilling of covenants, brotherhood, calling unto righteousness, calling unto God, charity, chastity, forgiveness, gratefulness, greeting, justice and equity, kindness, establishing peace and reconciliation, respect, correct weighing and measuring, spending in the way of God—to name a few. All above actions, and the avoidance of their opposites, fall under the term of righteous and pious living.

For the purpose of orderly explanation, we will describe our obligations to our fellow kind under the above two sub-headings.

## ***A. DUTIES TO WELL-DEFINED GROUPS***

There are many sectors of our society that have rights upon us because of their collective or specific needs. Islam is very particular that such needy sectors not be ignored in our daily affairs and that their best interests are fully recognised and honoured. There is frequent mention in the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> to look after these groups.

### **A1. DUTIES TOWARDS CHILDREN**

We often hear the phrase, “who does not love their children?” It is true that most parents love their children more than themselves and would lay down their lives to prevent any harm coming to their offspring. Yet, they routinely fail to provide adequate education, upbringing and spiritual guidance as the children are growing up.

Our children are our most precious asset. Their correct upbringing and moulding into a beneficial member of the human society is not only desirable but an extremely important duty and obligation for all of us.

Not only is it our duty to provide food, shelter, clothing, education and love to our children but also to be mindful of their spiritual growth and progress. When a Muslim child is born, it is customary to give *Adhān* in its ears. This symbolic act marks the beginning of imparting spiritual knowl-

edge to the child, which is continued throughout the formative years and even beyond. In the present age, much emphasis is being laid on secular education and the desire that our children acquire adequate work-related skills. However, spiritual education is just as important—if not more—in leading a balanced and meaningful life. Thus, teaching of the Holy Qur’an, instructions in the matter of the *Ṣalāt*, encouragement to keep the fasts, and constant exhortations to become righteous individuals are some of the obligations that we owe to our children. We also need to encourage them in the gaining of knowledge, maintenance of good health, keeping of good company, avoidance of bad habits and conducting themselves in a generally upright and honourable manner. In this context, the Holy Qur’an teaches us the following prayers with respect to our children:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ ۖ

Our Lord, make us submissive to Thee and *make* of our **offspring** a people submissive to Thee... (2:129)

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

My Lord, grant me from Thyself pure **offspring**; surely, Thou art the Hearer of prayer. (3:39)

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَ لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ إِمْلَاقٍ ۖ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ

Say, Come, I will rehearse to you what your Lord has forbidden: that you associate not anything as partner with Him and that you do good to parents, and that you kill not your **children** for fear of poverty—it is We Who provide for you and for them....” (6:152)

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُّقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۖ

My Lord, make me observe Prayer, and my **children**, too. (14:41)

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٥٥﴾

Our Lord, grant us of our wives and **children** the delight of *our* eyes, and make us a model for the righteous. (25:75)

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ

أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي

فِي دُرِّيَّتِي ۖ إِنَّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَىكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

My Lord, grant me *the power* that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do such good works as may please Thee. And make my **seed** righteous for me. I do turn to Thee; and, truly, I am of those who submit *to Thee*. (46:16)

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was very particular that children be treated fairly, with kindness and that their manners be perfected. Following are some of his directives in this respect:

"اعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ آبْنَائِكُمْ اْعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ آبْنَائِكُمْ"

"Treat your children fairly; treat your children fairly." *Sunan an-Nasā'i, Book 31, Hadith 16*

"أَكْرِمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ وَأَحْسِنُوا أَدَبَهُمْ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Be kind to your children and perfect their manners." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 15*

"أَلَا لَا تَجْنِي أُمَّ عَلَى وَلَدٍ أَلَا لَا تَجْنِي أُمَّ عَلَى وَلَدٍ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "No child should be punished because of his mother's crime." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 21, Hadith 2772*

" مَا مِنَ النَّاسِ مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يُتَوَقَّى  
لَهُ ثَلَاثٌ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحِنْثَ، إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ بِفَضْلِ رَحْمَتِهِ إِيَّاهُمْ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "A Muslim whose three children die before the age of puberty will be granted Paradise by Allah due to His mercy for them." *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 23, Hadith 12*

" اَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ أَوْلَادِكُمْ اَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ أَبْنَائِكُمْ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Act equally between your children; act equally between your sons." *Sunan Abu Da'ūd, Book 23, Hadith 3537*

" إِنَّ أَطْيَبَ مَا أَكَلْتُمْ مِنْ كَسْبِكُمْ وَإِنَّ أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ كَسْبِكُمْ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The best of your provision is what you earn, and your children are part of what you earn." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 12, Hadith 2378*

" لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيَعْرِفْ شَرَفَ كَبِيرِنَا "

"He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor knows the honour of our elders." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 1920*

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> believes that instead of disciplining children harshly, their parents should pray for them. In this context, he states:

"An individual with self-respect and control over himself, who is also forbearing and dignified, has the right to correct a child to a certain extent as the occasion demands or seek to guide the child. But a wrathful and hot-headed person who is easily provoked is not fit to be a guardian of children. I wish that, instead of punishing children, parents would have recourse to prayer, and should make it a habit to supplicate earnestly for their children; for the supplications of parents on behalf of their children meet with special acceptance."

[*Malḡūzat*, vol. 2, p. 4; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 335]

“I pray for my children and require them to follow a broad set of rules of behaviour and no more. Beyond this I put my full trust in Allah Almighty in the confidence that the seed of good fortune inherent in each of them will flower at its proper time.” [*Malḡūzat*, vol. 2, p. 5; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 336]

One aspect of the rights of children is not to kill them for fear of poverty. This custom was practised in the pre-Islamic culture of Arabia, and also by some other people in the world. In this regard the Holy Qur’an says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ ۖ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطَاً كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٢﴾

Kill not your **children** for fear of poverty. It is We Who provide for them and for you. (17:32)

“Fear of poverty” may include fear of feeding them or fear of providing for their needs such as education and marriage expenses. This would also include carrying out abortion for the simple reason of limiting the size of one’s family. Thus, our children have a right—even before their birth—not to have their lives terminated for fear of poverty.

## A2. DUTIES TO PARENTS

Just as the fifth Commandment in the Hebrew Bible exhorts the follower to honour the father and the mother, the religion of Islam lays great stress on being considerate and kind to one’s parents. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And remember the time when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel: “You shall worship *nothing* but Allah and *show* kindness to **parents**....” (2:84)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ <sup>ط</sup> قُلْ مَا أُنْفِقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ <sup>ط</sup>

They ask thee what they shall spend. Say, “Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for **parents** and near relatives and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer.” (2:216)

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَالْبَالِغِينَ إِحْسَانًا <sup>ج</sup>

Say, Come, I will rehearse to you what your Lord has forbidden: that you associate not anything as partner with Him and that you do good to **parents**....” (6:152)

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ

(The prayer of Abraham<sup>as</sup>):

“Our Lord, grant forgiveness to me and to my **parents**....” (14:42)

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَالْبَالِغِينَ إِحْسَانًا <sup>ط</sup> إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٍ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾  
وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنِي صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

Thy Lord has commanded, “Worship none but Him, and *show* kindness to **parents**. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, never say unto them any word expressive of disgust nor reproach them, but address them with kind words.

“And lower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness. And say, ‘My

And We have enjoined on man to be good to his **parents**. His mother bears him with pain, and brings him forth with pain. And the bearing of him and his weaning takes thirty months, till, when he attains his full maturity and reaches *the age of* forty years, he says, “My Lord, grant me *the power* that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my **parents**, and that I may do such good works as may please Thee. And make my seed righteous for me. I do turn to Thee; and, truly, I am of those who submit *to Thee*.” (46:16)



Qur'anic exhortations lay great stress on being kind to parents and not uttering anything that would hurt their feelings. Along with this, one is also expected to pray for them.

Part of being kind to parents is to listen to their words and advice. In this context, the Holy Qur'an presents the example of the Prophet Yahya:

وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ۝  
وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ۝

And he was pious

And dutiful toward his **parents**. And he was not haughty *and* rebellious.  
(19:14-15)

Thus, parents are to be obeyed in all sensible matters. An obvious exception is mentioned by the Holy Qur'an if they urge the children to hold equals with God:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا ۖ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ  
فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝

And We have enjoined on man kindness to his **parents**; but if they contend with you so that you *too* may associate partners with Me, of which you have no knowledge whatsoever, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, and I shall inform you of what you did. (29:9)

Interestingly, even in such dire situations when the parents urge the children towards partnership with God, the children are exhorted to remain kind to their parents and continue giving them companionship in other worldly affairs.

There are numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> urging the Muslims to be kind and obedient to their parents:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ  
"مِنَ الْكَبَائِرِ شَتْمُ الرَّجُلِ وَالِدَيْهِ". قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ  
هَلْ يَشْتِمُ الرَّجُلُ وَالِدَيْهِ قَالَ "نَعَمْ يَسُبُّ أَبَا الرَّجُلِ فَيَسُبُّ أَبَاهُ وَيَسُبُّ أُمَّهُ  
فَيَسُبُّ أُمَّهُ".

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Abusing one's parents is one of the major sins." On hearing this, the people asked: "Does a man abuse his parents?" The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied: "Yes, one abuses the father of another man, who in turn abuses his father. One abuses his mother and he in turn abuses his mother." *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 169*

"مِنَ الْكَبَائِرِ أَنْ يَشْتِمَ الرَّجُلُ وَالِدَيْهِ"

"It is among the greatest of sins that a man should curse his parents." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 6*

"ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ  
مُسْتَجَابَاتٌ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ دَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ وَدَعْوَةُ الْمُسَافِرِ وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Three supplications are answered, there being no doubt about them: that of a father, that of a traveller and that of one who has been wronged." *Sunan Abu Da'ūd, Book 8, Hadith 121*

"رِضَا الرَّبِّ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدِ وَسَخَطُ الرَّبِّ فِي سَخَطِ الْوَالِدِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The Lord's pleasure is in the parents' pleasure, and the Lord's anger is in the parents' anger." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 3*

"الْوَالِدُ أَوْسَطُ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ فَأَضِعْ ذَلِكَ الْبَابَ أَوْ احْفَظْهُ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The father is the middle door of Paradise, so it is up to you whether you take advantage of it or not.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 7*

When asked as to the best of deeds, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> included being dutiful to one’s parents:

وعن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أي الأعمال أفضل؟ قال: "الصلاة على أوقتها" قلت: ثم أي؟ قال: "بر الوالدين" قلت ثم أي؟ قال: "الجهاد في سبيل الله" ((متفق عليه))

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “To believe in Allah..... Prayers at their fixed times..... Being dutiful to parents ..... Striving in the way of Allah.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1074*

The Qur’anic verses indicate that between the two parents, the mother is more deserving of service by the children. The same theme is echoed in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>:

When asked who amongst the people was most deserving of one’s good treatment, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied:

" أُمُّكَ ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ ثُمَّ أَدْنَاكَ "

“Your mother, again your mother, again your mother, then your father, then your nearest relatives according to the order (of nearness).” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 2*

أَوْصِي امْرَأً بِأُمِّهِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “I enjoin each one to honour his mother.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 1*

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ عَمَلًا أَقْرَبَ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ بِرِّ الْوَالِدَةِ.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “I do not know of a deed closer to Allah, the Ex-

alted and Majestic, other than dutifulness to the mother.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufradat, Book 1, Hadith 4*

قَالَ " وَيُحَكِّ الزَّم رِجْلَهَا فَتَمَّ الْجَنَّةُ "

When a person wanted to go for Jihad, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> asked him if his mother was still alive. On receiving the answer in the affirmative, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Go back and serve her, for there is Paradise.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 24, Hadith 2886*

" مَنْ عَزَّى تَكْلَى كَسِي بُرْدًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ "

“Whoever consoles a bereaved mother, he will be clothed with coolness in Paradise.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 10, Hadith 112*

قَالَ " فَالزَّمَهَا فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ رِجْلِهَا "

When a Muslim wished to go for Jihad and asked for the advice of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, he asked if he had a mother. On receiving an affirmative answer, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Then stay with her, for Paradise is under her feet.” *Sunan an-Nasā’i, Book 25, Hadith 20*

### A3. DUTIES TO RELATIVES

When exhorting the believers to be kind and considerate to others, the Holy Qur’an has repeatedly included one’s relatives and kindred. In Islam, the relatives are not only those who are related by one’s descent or blood-line but also those who are related through marriages. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿٥٥﴾

And He it is Who has created man from water, and has made for him **kindred** by descent and **kindred** by marriage; and thy Lord is All-Powerful. (25:55)

The importance accorded to kindred and relatives can be appreciated by

the fact that their rank is placed immediately after one's own parents. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And *remember the time* when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel: "You shall worship *nothing* but Allah and *show* kindness to parents and to **kindred**.... (2:84)

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to **kindred**.... (4:37)

Aside from being kind to our relatives, we are also exhorted to spend our wealth for their benefit as well. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَ  
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ

They ask thee what they shall spend. Say, "Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for parents and near **relatives** and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer." (2:216)

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولَى الْقُرْبَىٰ

And let not those who possess wealth and plenty among you swear not to give *aught* to the **kindred**.... (24:23)

The Traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> lay similarly high emphasis on the kind and gentle treatment of one's relatives:

الرَّحِمُ شُجْنَةٌ مِنَ  
الرَّحْمَنِ فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلَهُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَهَا قَطَعَهُ اللَّهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The womb<sup>15</sup> is named after Ar-Rahmān, so whoever connects it, Allah connects him, and whoever severs it, Allah severs him." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 30*

تَعَلَّمُوا مِنْ أَسَابِكُمْ مَا تَصِلُونَ بِهِ أَرْحَامَكُمْ فَإِنَّ صَلَاةَ  
الرَّحِمِ مَحَبَّةٌ فِي الْأَهْلِ مَثْرَاءٌ فِي الْمَالِ مَنَسَاءٌ فِي الْأَثَرِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Learn enough about your lineage to facilitate keeping your ties of kinship. For indeed keeping the ties of kinship encourages affection among the relatives, increases wealth, and increases lifespan." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 85*

" لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعٌ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "A person who severs the bond of kinship will not enter Paradise." *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 78, Hadith 15*

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ عَلَى الْمِسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ وَعَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ اثْنَتَانِ صَدَقَةٌ وَصِلَةٌ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Giving charity to a poor person is charity, and (giving) to a relative is two things: charity and upholding the ties of kinship." *Sunan an-Nasā'ī, Book 23, Hadith 148*

" مَا مِنْ ذَنْبٍ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ يُعَجِّلَ اللَّهُ لِصَاحِبِهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي  
الدُّنْيَا مَعَ مَا يَدَّخِرُ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ - مِنَ الْبَغْيِ وَقَطِيعَةِ الرَّحِمِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "There is no sin more deserving that Allah hasten the punishment in this world, in addition to what is stored up for him in the

<sup>15</sup> The womb (*rahim* in Arabic), shares the root *rh* with *Ar-Rahmān*, an attribute of God.

Hereafter, than injustice and severing the ties of kinship.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4351*

“أهل الجنة ثلاثة: ذو سلطان مقسط موفق، ورجل رحيم رفيق القلب لكل ذي قربي ومسلم، وعفيف متعفف ذو عيال”

Citing various people in heaven, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> included: “A man who shows mercy to his relatives.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 662*

“مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُبْسَطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحِمَهُ”

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Anyone who is pleased that his sustenance is expanded and his age extended, should do kindness to his near relatives.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 9, Hadith 138*

“أَسْرَعُ الْخَيْرِ ثَوَابًا الْبِرُّ وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ وَأَسْرَعُ الشَّرِّ عُقُوبَةً الْبَغْيُ وَقَطِيعَةُ الرَّحِمِ”

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The most quickly rewarded of good deeds are kindness and upholding the ties of kinship...” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4352*

#### A4. DUTIES TO ORPHANS

After the parents and relatives, orphans are given a high priority in Islam as a group that requires social and financial support. Of particular concern is the risk to the orphans’ property while they are minor and the marriage situation of orphan girls. There are numerous exhortations in the Holy Qur’an that address the issues specific to the orphans, as quoted below:

وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَآءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْبُسُكِيِّنَ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝

And remember the time when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel: “You shall worship *nothing* but Allah and *show* kindness to parents and to kindred and **orphans** and the poor, and speak to men kindly and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakāt;”... (2:84)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَ  
الْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾

They ask thee what they shall spend. Say, “Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for parents and near relatives and **orphans** and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, surely Allah knows it well.” (2:216)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَى ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۚ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۚ

And they ask thee concerning the **orphans**. Say: “Promotion of their welfare is *an act of* great goodness. And if you intermix with them, they are your brethren... (2:221)

وَأَتُوا الْيَتَامَى أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ ۚ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَى  
أَمْوَالِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٢١﴾  
وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَى فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِمَّا ضَرَفْتُمْ وَلَكُمْ مِنْهُنَّ ثَلَاثٌ وَرُبْعٌ ۚ

And give to the **orphans** their property and exchange not the bad for the good, and devour not their property with your own. Surely it is a great sin.

And if you fear that you, *the society*, may fail to do justice in matters concerning orphans *in the aftermath of war* then marry women of your choice two or three or four. (4:3-4)



وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَنْسَتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ  
أَمْوَالَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ ۚ  
وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَكُنْ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٤﴾

And test the understanding of the **orphans** until they attain the age of marriage; then, if you find in them sound judgment, deliver to them their property; and devour it not in extravagance and haste against their growing up... And when you deliver to them their property, then call witness in their presence. And Allah is sufficient as a Reckoner. (4:7)

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ  
قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٥﴾

And when *other* relations and **orphans** and the poor are present at the division of *heritage*, give them *something* therefrom and speak to them words of kindness. (4:9)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا ۖ وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ  
سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

Surely, they who devour the property of **orphans** unjustly, only swallow fire into their bellies, and they shall burn in a blazing fire. (4:11)

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَالْبَالُ الْيُسْرَىٰ عَلَى الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا ۚ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ  
وَالْبَارِذَى الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ  
أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and **orphans**, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by *your* side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud *and* the boastful. (4:37)

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ ۖ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ ۖ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِيِّ النِّسَاءِ ۚ لَا تُوْثَقُنَّ لَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَ تَرْغَبُونَ ۚ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ ۚ وَالْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ ۚ وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا إِلَيْتِي بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٨﴾

And they seek of thee the decision *of the Law* with regard to women. Say, “Allah gives you His decision regarding them. And so does that which is recited to you in the Book concerning the orphan girls whom you give not what is prescribed for them and whom you desire to marry, and *concerning* the weak among children. And *He enjoins you to* observe equity towards the **orphans**. And whatever good you do, surely Allah knows it well. (4:128)

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۚ

And approach not the property of the **orphan**, except *in a way* which is best, till he attains his maturity... (6:153; 17:35)

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٨﴾  
وَلَا تَحْضُونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿١٩﴾

Nay, but you honour not the **orphan**,  
And you urge not one another to feed the poor, (89:18-19)

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١١﴾  
فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقْبَةُ ۖ  
فَكَ رَقَبَةٍ ۖ  
أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ۖ  
يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۖ  
أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ۖ

And We showed him two ascending paths of nobility.  
But he did not follow the path of “Aqabah”..  
And what should make you know what the “Aqabah” is?  
*It is* the freeing of a slave.  
Or the feeding in a day of hunger  
An **orphan** near of kin,  
Or a poor man *lying* in the dust. (90:11-17)

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۖ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۖ

So the **orphan**, oppress not,  
And as for the beggar chide him not, (93:10-11)

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۖ  
فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ  
وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ۖ

Hast thou seen him who rejects religion?  
That is the one who drives away the **orphan**,  
And urges not the feeding of the poor. (107:2-4)

Like the Holy Qur'an, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> lay great stress on the well-being of the orphans. Below are presented a sampling of some of the Traditions on this subject:

" أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ لَهُ أَوْ لِغَيْرِهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ كَهَاتَيْنِ إِذَا اتَّقَى "

Indicating his middle and index fingers, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "I and the one who guards the orphan, whether for himself or for someone else, will be like these two in the Garden, when he has *taqwa*." *Al-Muwatta, Book 51, Hadith 1737*

" خَيْرُ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ بَيْتٌ فِيهِ  
يَتِيمٌ يُحْسَنُ إِلَيْهِ وَشَرُّ بَيْتٍ فِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ بَيْتٌ فِيهِ يَتِيمٌ يُسَاءُ إِلَيْهِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The best house among the Muslim is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated well. And the worst house among the Muslims is a house in which there is an orphan who is treated badly." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 23*

" أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ هَكَذَا "

Putting his middle and index fingers together, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "I and the one who looks after an orphan will be like this in Paradise," showing his middle and index fingers and separating them. *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 68, Hadith 53*

تُسْتَأْمَرُ الْيَتِيمَةُ فِي نَفْسِهَا فَإِنْ سَكَتَتْ فَهُوَ إِذْنُهَا وَإِنْ أَبَتْ فَلَا جَوَازَ عَلَيْهَا

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "An orphan girl should be consulted with regard to marriage, and if she remains silent, that is her permission. If she refuses then she is not to be forced." *Sunan an-Nasā'i, Book 26, Hadith 75*

" اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أُحَرِّجُ حَقَّ الضَّعِيفَيْنِ الْيَتِيمِ وَالْمَرْأَةِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "O Allah! Bear witness that I have issued a warning concerning (failure to fulfil) the rights of the two weak ones: orphans and women." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 22*

" مَنْ قَبَضَ يَتِيمًا بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ وَشَرَابِهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ  
الْجَنَّةَ الْبَتَّةَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْمَلَ ذَنْبًا لَا يُغْفَرُ لَهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Whoever takes in an orphan among the Muslims to raise, to feed him and give him drink, Allah admits him into Paradise without doubt, unless he has done a sin for which he is not forgiven." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 23*

فَأَكْرِمُوهُمْ كَكِرَامَةِ أَوْلَادِكُمْ وَأَطْعِمُوهُمْ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ

With respect to slaves and orphans, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Be as kind to them as you are to your own children, and feed them with the same food that you eat." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 33, Hadith 35*

## A5. DUTIES TO THE NEEDY

A needy person is one who is poor and does not have enough to live on. Every country and every society has a sector of poor people—whose size varies with the general level of prosperity of the country and the welfare system in place. Even the first-world countries of today have poor people in them. Poverty is a relative state and the absolute conditions of the poor people vary from place to place and from one age to another. Similarly, the reasons for poverty are numerous and may include lack of economic opportunity, extreme financial loss, wars, natural disasters, subjugation of one people by another, etc.

Islam is extremely mindful of the condition of the poor people—irrespective as to how they came to be poor—and exhorts the society in general to take care of them. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly reminds the believers to be kind to the poor, to feed them and to help them financially:

وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي  
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ۚ

And remember the time when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel: “You shall worship *nothing* but Allah and *show* kindness to parents and to kindred and orphans and the **poor**, and speak to men kindly and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakāt;”... (2:84)

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۚ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُم مِّن سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

If you give alms openly, it is well *and good*; but if you conceal them and give them to the **poor**, it is better for you; and He will remove from you *many* of your sins... (2:272)

لِلْفُقَرَآءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ ۚ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسَيِّئِهِمْ ۚ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۚ

*These alms are for the **poor** who are detained in the cause of Allah and are unable to move about in the land. The ignorant man thinks them to be free from want because of their abstaining from begging. Thou shalt know them by their appearance; they do not beg of men with importunity...* (2:274)

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَ الْمَسْكِينِ وَ الْعَبْدِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَ الْمَوْلَافَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ فِي الرِّقَابِ وَ الْغَرَمِيِّنَ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

The alms are only for the **poor and the needy**, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the *freeing of slaves*, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer—an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. (9:60)

وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْبِسْكَينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذِرْ تَبَذِيرًا ۝٢٧

And give thou to the kinsman his due, and to the **poor** and the wayfarer, and squander not *thy wealth* extravagantly. (17:27)

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۝٩  
إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ۝١٠

[Speaking of the virtuous]:  
And they feed, for love of Him, the **poor**, the orphan, and the prisoner,  
Saying, “We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you. (76:9-10)

فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ۝٢٩

[God’s exhortation to Abraham regarding the animals slaughtered during the Pilgrimage]:

Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed, the **needy**. (22:29)

In the religion of Islam, the expiation of many sins and wrongdoings is feeding of poor persons. Following are some examples.

Expiation for missing a fast:

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ط

And for those who are able to fast *only* with great difficulty is an expiation—the feeding of a **poor** man... (2:185)

Expiation for breaking an oath:



لَا يُؤْخَذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْبَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤْخَذُكُم بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْبَانَ ۖ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ  
إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ۖ

Allah will not call you to account for *such* of your oaths as are vain, but He will call you to account for the oaths which you take in earnest. The expiation for this is the feeding of ten **poor** persons with *such* average food as you feed your families with, or the clothing of them or the freeing of a neck. (5:90)

#### Expiation for killing game while in a state of pilgrimage:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۚ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا  
فَجَزَاءٌ مِمَّا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ هَدْيًا بَدِغِ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ  
كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا

O ye who believe! kill not game while you are in a state of pilgrimage. And whoso amongst you kills it intentionally, its compensation is a quadruped like unto that which he has killed, as determined by two just men from among you, *the same* to be brought as an offering to the Ka'ba; or as an expiation *he shall have* to feed **poor** persons, or fast an equivalent number of *days*... (5:96)

#### Expiation for calling one's wife as mother<sup>16</sup>:

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ  
يَتَّخِذُوا ذَلِكُمْ تَوَعُّظًا بِهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

<sup>16</sup> The Arabs used the ploy of calling their wives as mothers and thus refusing to have marital relations with them and leaving them in perplexity.



فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامَ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتْبَاسَا ۖ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ  
فَاطْعَامُ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ۖ

As to those who call their wives ‘mothers’, and then would go back on what they have said, *the penalty for it* is the freeing of a slave before they touch each other. This is what you are admonished with. And Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.

But whoso does not find *one*, he must fast for two consecutive months, before they touch each other. And whoso is not able to do so, should feed sixty **poor** people... (58:4-5)

The poor have a special part in the spoils of war:

مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ  
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ  
الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ ۚ وَمَا نَهَكُمُ عَنْهُ فَأَنْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝  
لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ  
وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصَرُونَ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ۝

Whatever Allah has given to His Messenger as spoils from the people of the towns is for Allah and for the Messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the **needy** and the wayfarer, that it may not circulate *only* among those of you who are rich. And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from *that*. And fear Allah; surely, Allah is Severe in retribution.

*These spoils* are for the **poor** Refugees who have been driven out from their homes and their possessions while seeking grace from Allah and *His* pleasure, and helping Allah and His Messenger. These it is who are true *in their faith*. (59:8-9)

The poor should be given something at the division of the estate:

وَإِذَا حَصَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ  
قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٩﴾

And when *other* relations and orphans and the **poor** are present at the division of *heritage*, give them *something* therefrom and speak to them words of kindness. (4:9)

Feeding of poor is a sign of the virtuous ones:

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا ﴿٨﴾  
وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٩﴾  
إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾  
إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَتَطِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

(Referring to the virtuous ones):

They fulfil *their* vow, and fear a day the evil of which is widespread.

And they feed, for love of Him, the **poor**, the orphan, and the prisoner,

Saying, “We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you.

“Verily, we fear from our Lord a frowning and distressful day.” (76:8-11)

Not feeding the poor is a sign of the inmates of hell:

خُذُوا فَعْلُوهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ﴿٣٢﴾  
ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ﴿٣٣﴾

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْبُسْكَانِ ﴿٣٥﴾

(Referring to the inmates of Hell):

Seize him and fetter him,

Then cast him into Hell.

Then put him into a chain the length of which is seventy cubits;

Verily, he did not believe in Allah, the Great,

And he did not urge the feeding of the **poor**. (69:31-35)

Islam recognises that some good deeds are not easy to carry out. In the Holy Qur'an, some of these deeds are referred to as 'Aqabah or uphill tasks. Feeding of the poor is included among them:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١١﴾ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١٢﴾  
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾  
أَوْ اطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ يَتِيماً ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾  
أَوْ مَسْكِيناً ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٧﴾

And We have showed him two ascending paths of nobility.

But he did not follow the path of 'Aqabah'.

And what should make thee know what the 'Aqabah' is?

*It is* the freeing of a slave.

Or feeding in a day of hunger

An orphan near of kin,

Or a **poor** man *lying* in the dust. (90:11-17)

The Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> are full of exhortations regarding the feeding of the poor and a kind treatment unto them. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> liked poverty so much that he prayed to God to be raised in the hereafter among the poor:

"اللَّهُمَّ أَحْنِي مِسْكِينًا وَأَمِتْنِي مِسْكِينًا وَاحْشُرْنِي فِي زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِينِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "O Allah, cause me to live poor and cause me to die **poor**, and gather me among the **poor** (on the Day of Judgment)." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4265*

"لَيْسَ الْمِسْكِينُ بِهَذَا الطَّوَّافِ الَّذِي  
يَطُوفُ عَلَى النَّاسِ تَرُدُّهُ اللَّقْمَةُ وَاللُّقْمَتَانِ وَالتَّمْرَتَانِ  
الَّذِي لَا يَجِدُ غِنًى يُغْنِيهِ وَلَا يُفْطِنُ لَهُ فَيَتَصَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يَقُومُ  
فَيَسْأَلُ النَّاسَ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The **poor** man is not the one who goes around asking people and they send him away with a morsel or two. The **poor** one is he who does not possess independence of means and no one notices him to give charity to him, and he does not stand and ask of people." *Sunan an-Nasā'ī, Book 23, Hadith 138*

يَدْخُلُ الْفُقَرَاءُ الْجَنَّةَ قَبْلَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The **poor** are admitted into Paradise before the rich." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 36, Hadith 50*

قُمْتُ عَلَى بَابِ الْجَنَّةِ فَكَانَ عَامَّةَ مَنْ  
دَخَلَهَا الْمَسَاكِينُ، وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَدِّ مُحْبُسُونَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "I stood at the gate of Paradise and saw that the majority of the people who had entered it were **poor** people, while the rich were stopped (for the reckoning of their accounts)." *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 67, Hadith 130*

شَرُّ الطَّعَامِ طَعَامُ الْوَلِيمَةِ يُدْعَى لَهَا  
الْأَغْنِيَاءُ، وَيُتْرَكُ الْفُقَرَاءُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The worst food is that of a wedding banquet to which only the rich are invited while the **poor** are ignored.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 67, Hadith 112*

الْمُفْلِسُ فِينَا مَنْ لَا دِرْهَمَ لَهُ وَلَا مَتَاعَ  
إِنَّ الْمُفْلِسَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِصَلَاةٍ وَصِيَامٍ وَزَكَاةٍ وَيَأْتِي قَدْ  
شَتَمَ هَذَا وَقَذَفَ هَذَا وَأَكَلَ مَالَ هَذَا وَسَفَكَ دَمَ هَذَا وَضَرَبَ هَذَا فَيُعْطَى هَذَا  
مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “A **poor** man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth. The **poor** of my Ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with Prayers and Fasts and Zakāt but (would be bankrupt that day) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered).” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 77*

"السَّاعِي عَلَى الْأَرْمَلَةِ وَالْمِسْكِينِ كَالْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The one who strives to sponsor a widow or a **poor** person is like the one who strives in Jihad in the cause of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime.” *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 23, Hadith 143*

"إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ عَلَى الْمِسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ وَعَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ اثْنَتَانِ صَدَقَةٌ وَصَلَةٌ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Giving charity to a **poor** person is charity, and (giving) to a relative is two things: charity and upholding the ties of kinship.” *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 23, Hadith 148*

## A6. DUTIES TO NEIGHBOURS

After one's immediate family and relatives, the next group with which people deal on a regular basis are one's neighbours. Thus, for the smooth operation of a society, it is imperative that one has good and amicable relations with the neighbours. In its exhortation to be kind to several groups, the Holy Qur'an mentions the neighbours immediately after the parents, the kindred, the orphans and the needy:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٧﴾

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the **neighbour** that is a kinsman and the **neighbour** that is a stranger, and the companion by *your* side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud *and* the boastful, (4:37)

The Holy Prophet placed great responsibility on people with respect to their neighbours:

"مَا زَالَ جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورَّثُهُ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Gabriel kept on recommending me about treating the **neighbours** in a kind and polite manner, so much so that I thought that he would order (me) to make them (my) heirs." *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 78, Hadith 46*

"جَارُ الدَّارِ أَحَقُّ بِدَارِ الْجَارِ أَوْ الْأَرْضِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "A neighbour has the best claim<sup>17</sup> to the house or

<sup>17</sup> Meaning the right of pre-emption.

land of the **neighbour**.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 24, Hadith 102*

وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُؤْذِ جَارَهُ،

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his **neighbour**.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 81, Hadith 64*

وخير الجيران عند الله تعالى خيرهم لجاره

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The neighbour that is best to Allah is the one that is best to his **neighbour**.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Book 1, Hadith 311*

"إِذَا عَمِلْتَ مَرَقَةً فَأَكْثِرْ مَاءَهَا وَاعْتَزِفْ لِجِيرَانِكَ مِنْهَا"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “When you make broth, add more water and give some to your **neighbour**.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 29, Hadith 3487*

"إِلَى أَقْرَبِهِمَا مِنْكَ بَابًا"

When asked as to which of the two **neighbours** has priority, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied: “The one whose gate is nearer to you.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 78, Hadith 51*

"لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ - أَوْ قَالَ لِجَارِهِ - مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother” or he said, “for his **neighbour**, what he loves for himself.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 1, Hadith 69*

"الْجَارُ أَحَقُّ بِصَقْبِهِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The **neighbour** has more right to be taken care of by his neighbour.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 90, Hadith 25*

وَاللَّهُ لَا يُؤْمِنُ الَّذِي لَا يَأْمَنُ جَارُهُ بَوَائِقَهُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “By Allah, he does not believe—the person whose **neighbour** does not feel safe from his evil.” *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 78, Hadith 47*

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يُوْذِي جَارَهُ،

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not hurt his **neighbour**.” *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 78, Hadith 163*

" إِذَا قَالَ جِيرَانُكَ إِنَّكَ  
قَدْ أَحْسَنْتَ فَقَدْ أَحْسَنْتَ وَإِذَا قَالُوا إِنَّكَ قَدْ أَسَأْتَ فَقَدْ أَسَأْتَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “If your **neighbours** say that you have done something good, then you have done well; and if they say that you have done something bad, then you have done something bad.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4362*

لَأَنْ يَزْنِيَ الرَّجُلُ بِعَشْرِ نِسَوَةٍ، أَيْسَرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَنْ يَزْنِيَ بِامْرَأَةِ جَارِهِ،  
لَأَنْ يَسْرِقَ مِنْ عَشْرَةِ أَهْلِ أَبْيَاتٍ، أَيْسَرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَنْ يَسْرِقَ مِنْ بَيْتِ جَارِهِ.

“It is less serious for a man to fornicate with ten women than for him to fornicate with his **neighbour’s** wife. It is less serious for a man to steal from ten houses than it is for him to steal from his neighbour’s house.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 6, Hadith 3*

## A7. DUTIES TO THE WAYFARER

Next in line is the kind treatment to be accorded a co-traveller or a wayfarer. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:



وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنُبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۖ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٧﴾

And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the **companion** by *your* side, and the **wayfarer**, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud *and* the boastful, (4:37)

Teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also placed great emphasis on the kind treatment of the travellers:

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ رَجُلٌ عَلَىٰ فَضْلِ مَاءٍ بِالطَّرِيقِ يَمْنَعُ ابْنَ السَّبِيلِ مِنْهُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “There are three to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, or look at them, or sanctify them, and theirs will be a painful torment: A man who has surplus water when travelling but he withholds it from a **wayfarer**....” *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 44, Hadith 14*

" ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ مُسْتَجَابَاتٌ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ دَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ وَدَعْوَةُ الْمُسَافِرِ وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Three supplications are answered, there being no doubt about them: that of a father, that of a **traveller** and that of one who has been wronged.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 8, Hadith 121*

"السَّفَرُ قِطْعَةٌ  
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ، يَمْنَعُ أَحَدَكُمْ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ وَنَوْمَهُ، فَإِذَا قَضَى نَهْمَتَهُ فَلْيُعَجِّلْ  
إِلَى أَهْلِهِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Travelling** is a kind of torture as it prevents one from eating, drinking and sleeping properly. So, when one’s needs are fulfilled, one should return quickly to one’s family.” *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 26, Hadith 31*

## A8. DUTIES TO SLAVES

Proper treatment of prisoners and freeing of slaves is a constant exhortation in Islam. Prisoners of war must be treated well and then ransomed for money or for services rendered or, if they have no one to ransom them, then set free on the condition that they will not fight against the Muslims in the future. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٩﴾  
إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the **prisoner**,  
Saying, “We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you. (76:9-10)

Likewise, the freeing of slaves is set as an expiation for committing some wrongs. In the sermon delivered during the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> laid great emphasis on the kind treatment of slaves, saying:

"مَنْ لَاءَ مَكُّمُ  
مِنْ مَمْلُوكِكُمْ فَأُطْعِمُوهُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ وَاكْسُوهُ مِمَّا تَكْتَسُونَ وَمَنْ لَمْ  
يُلَئِمْكُم مِنْهُمْ فَبِعِوْهِ وَلَا تُعَذِّبُوا خَلْقَ اللَّهِ"

“Feed those of your slaves who please you from what you eat and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves, but sell those who do not please you and do not punish Allah’s creatures.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 389*

With an injunction such as above where a Muslim is required to feed and clothe the slave in the same manner as he treats himself, slavery was bound to die out a natural death without resorting to special legislations. In Islam, the slaves also have the right to purchase their freedom through a deed of liberation.

## **A9. DUTIES TO WOMEN, WIVES AND HUSBANDS**

Islamic culture is based on due regard to human nature, recognition of physical and emotional differences between the two genders, and assignment of appropriate roles to men and women. Because of their physical strength, men are more suited to physical labour, participation in warfare, and acting as soldiers, policemen and custodians. Women, because of their emotional constitution, are more suited to the bringing up of children, looking after the ailing and being the catalyst in establishing peace and tranquility at home.

Thus, for the proper functioning of Islamic society, both men and women need to discharge their duties towards each other. The mutual dependency of the two genders is beautifully stated in the Holy Qur’an as:

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ط

“They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them...” (2:188).

There are several instances in the Holy Qur’an where Muslims are exhorted to protect the rights of women. Examples of these rights include: the right of women to inherit property from their parents, husbands and children; the right of women to be properly married and not subjected to fornication; the right of women to agree to their marriage proposals; the right of women to receive their dowries promptly; the right of women not to be ogled at in public; the right of married women not to be denied conjugal

relations; the right to assisted reconciliation in disputes with husbands; the right of women to seek divorce; the right of divorced women to be given adequate livelihood; the right of women not to suffer on account of their children; the right of women to get re-married after divorce or becoming widowed<sup>18</sup>; and the right of baby girls to enjoy the same welcome by their parents as newborn boys.

The women are potentially at greatest risk when they get married and entrust their affairs to their husbands who may not treat them well. In this context, the Holy Qur'an exhorts the husbands to be kind to their wives in the following words:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْعُرْفِ  
فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكُنَّ هُوَ أَشْيَاءً وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾

And consort with them in kindness; and if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing wherein Allah has placed much good. (4:20)

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states that the treatment of women at the hands of men ranges from extreme liberality to extreme constraint. In this context he mentions in his *Malḡūzāt*:

“In this respect there are two categories of men. There are those who have given women free licence to do whatever they want. Such women pay no heed to religion and conduct themselves in an un-Islamic manner, and there is no one to question them. On the other extreme, there are those who treat women with such severity and harshness that it is hard to distinguish their women from animals. They are treated worse than slaves and beasts. They beat them so mercilessly as if they were lifeless objects. They are treated so cruelly, that it has become a proverb in the Punjab that a woman is like a pair of shoes, which may be thrown away and replaced at will. Such attitude is extremely dangerous and contrary to Islam.

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<sup>18</sup> This may not appear to be a great deal today, but many cultures and creeds in history have prevented divorced or widowed women to remarry.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the perfect example for us in every aspect of life. Study his life and see how he conducted himself in relation to women. In my esteem, a man who stands up against a woman is a coward and not a man. If you study the life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) you will find that he was so gracious that, despite his station of dignity, he would stop even for an old woman and would not move on until she permitted him to do so. [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 4, p. 44; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 311-312]

And again:

Do not ever consider women to be contemptible and insignificant!! Our perfect guide, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ

‘The best among you is he who is best towards his wife.’

How can one claim to be pious when he does not behave well towards his wife.... It is unacceptable to get furious or hit one’s wife on the slightest pretence. There have been instances where an enraged husband hit his wife over some slight matter... and mortally wounded her. This is why God Almighty has said concerning them:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

“And consort with them in kindness;” (4:20) [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 3, p. 147; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 312]

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states that except for the committing of indecent acts—in which the husband has a right to discipline the wife—women should always be treated with great kindness. As he mentions in the *Malḡūzāt*:

“With the exception of indecency, all weaknesses and petulant behaviour peculiar to women should be tolerated. I find it shameful that a man should fight a woman. God has made us men, which is the consummation of His grace upon us, and we should express our gratitude for this great bounty by treating

women with kindness and compassion.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 1, p. 307; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 313]

“As for me, I once addressed my wife in a loud voice and I felt that my tone was indicative of displeasure though I had uttered no harsh words. Yet thereafter I sought forgiveness from God for a long time and offered supere-rogatory prayers with great humility and also gave alms because I felt that my harshness towards my wife might have been occasioned by some unconscious weakness in my obedience to God Almighty.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 2, p. 2, English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 313]

“Therefore, be good to your wives both spiritually and physically. Keep praying for them and avoid divorce. A person who is hasty in divorce is sinful in the eyes of God. Do not hasten to break like a dirty vessel that which God has brought together.” [*Toḡfah-e-Golarhviyyah*, *Rūḡānī Khazā’in*, vol. 17, p. 75; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 314]

Likewise, certain obligations are imposed upon the women towards their husbands. These obligations include that they should remain chaste; that they should guard the secrets of their husbands; and that they should spend the money of their husbands with care. Mentioning this exalted status of the husband, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> notes:

“For a woman, her husband is a manifestation of the Divine. According to a Hadith, had God been pleased to enjoin prostration before anyone but Himself, He would have enjoined upon a woman to prostrate herself before her husband. Hence a man should be both hard and soft suiting the occasion.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 3, p. 147; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 312-313]

In the religion of Islam, man is said to have a kind of superiority over women due to his physical strength and certain mental and emotional characteristics.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, man is entrusted with the task of disciplining

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<sup>19</sup> The superiority of man over woman is also mentioned in the Old Testament. After Adam and Eve had disobeyed the Divine command, God addresses woman in the following words: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring

women if they tread the path of lewdness and immorality. In this context, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states:

“There is no doubt that admonition is necessary if a woman behaves improperly. A husband ought to impress upon his wife that he will not tolerate anything which is contrary to the faith, and yet he is not a tyrant who will not overlook any mistake on her part.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 3, p. 147; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 312-313]

The occurrence of disputes in marriage is a common thing. However, if these disputes are not addressed in a timely and just manner, they can lead to divorce and potential violence. Thus, it is the obligation of Muslims to ease the tensions between husband and wife by encouraging reconciliation. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِن يُرِيدَا  
إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And if you fear a breach between them (husband and wife), then appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire reconciliation, Allah will affect it between them. (4:36)

## A10. DUTY OF OBEDIENCE TO OFFICIALS & RULERS

For the proper working of any society, it is imperative that due obedience be rendered towards those who are in authority. Of course, the ultimate authority in the world belongs to God alone and after Him, to His Messengers. However, there are many instances in our advanced societies where people are in charge of certain functions and departments and it is important that people should obey their directives. This hierarchical or graded system of obedience is clearly stated in the Holy Qur’an in the following words:

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forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Genesis, 3:16.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَ أَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَ أُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ؕ

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey *His* Messenger and those who are in authority over you. (4:60)

The words “those who are in authority” refer to anyone who has been placed in authority either by God’s command, or by the command of His Messenger, or by the choice of the people themselves. Thus, ranks such as policemen, tax collectors, religious jurists and government officials in general will all fall in this category and they all need to be obeyed.

The hierarchy mentioned in the above Qur’anic verse also carries a subtle message. That is, that initially, direction must be sought directly from the Word of God in our daily affairs. If the Holy Qur’an happens to be silent on a particular issue, then recourse should be made to the word of the Messenger. If the Hadith, too, is silent on that issue, then recourse should be made to what the religious scholars, jurists and other officials in society say in that matter.

Following are some admonitions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> with respect to rendering obedience to those in authority:

" اَسْمَعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَإِنْ اسْتُعْمِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ حَبَشِيٌّ كَانَ رَأْسُهُ زَبِيبَةً "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “You should listen to and obey your **ruler** even if he was an Ethiopian slave whose head looks like a raisin.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 93, Hadith 6*

" مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَمَنْ أَطَاعَ  
الْإِمَامَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَنِي وَمَنْ عَصَى الْإِمَامَ فَقَدْ عَصَانِي "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever obeys the **ruler**, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys the **ruler**, disobeys me.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 24, Hadith 2969*



" مَنْ كَرِهَ مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا فَلْيَصْرِ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ  
خَرَجَ مِنَ السُّلْطَانِ شَبْرًا مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Whoever disapproves of something done by his **ruler** then he should be patient, for whoever disobeys the **ruler**, even a little, will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of Ignorance." *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 92, Hadith 6*

" السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ حَقٌّ، مَا لَمْ  
يُؤْمَرْ بِالْمَعْصِيَةِ، فَإِذَا أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "It is obligatory for one to listen to and obey unless these orders involve disobedience (to Allah); but if an act of disobedience is imposed, one should not listen to or obey it." *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 56, Hadith 167*

" عَلَيْكَ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِي  
عُسْرِكَ وَيُسْرِكَ وَمَنْشَطِكَ وَمَكْرَهِكَ وَأَثَرِهِ عَلَيْكَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "It is obligatory for you to listen to the **ruler** and obey him in adversity and prosperity, in pleasure and displeasure, and even when another person is given preference over you." *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim, Book 33, Hadith 52*

## ***B. DUTIES TOWARDS PUBLIC AT LARGE***

In the previous section we considered duties that needed to be discharged to well-defined segments of our society. In the present section we will deal with the duties that individuals need to discharge towards the public at large for the harmonious functioning of the society. Below, these duties are highlighted in alphabetical order:

## B1. DUTY TO ADVISE AND COUNSEL

We as well as others in our society are always in need of good advice and consultation. Thus, it is obligatory for those who are in a position to do so to render such service to our brothers and sisters. Giving of advice needs to be carried out in good faith and not with the intention of criticising, shaming or highlighting the lack of knowledge on the part of the other person.

The following Hadiths are noteworthy in this context:

يَقُولُ بَايَعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَشْتَرِطُ عَلَى  
وَالنُّصِيحَ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

Jairi bin ‘Abdullah<sup>ra</sup> narrates: “When I gave the pledge of allegiance to Allah’s Apostle<sup>sa</sup>, he made it a condition that I should give good **advice** to every Muslim.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 54, Hadith 3*

وَمَنْ اسْتَشَارَهُ أَخُوهُ الْمُسْلِمُ، فَأَشَارَ عَلَيْهِ بِغَيْرِ رُشْدٍ فَقَدْ خَانَهُ

“Anyone who gives his Muslim brother misguided **advice** when they consult him, has betrayed them.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 13, Hadith 4*

"الْمُسْتَشَارُ مُؤْتَمَنٌ"

“He who is **consulted** is entrusted.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 356*

## B2. DUTY TO ESTABLISH BROTHERHOOD & UNITY

Islam lays great emphasis on the brotherhood of all Muslims and exhorts them to remain united and not to splinter into sects. In this regard, the following Qur’anic injunctions are noteworthy:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا<sup>ص</sup>

And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not **divided**; (3:104)

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ

And the believers, men and women, are **friends** one of another. (9:71)

According to evolutionary biologists, one important factor by which *Homo sapiens* have been able to reach the pinnacle of life on earth is through their amazing ability to cooperate with each other in large numbers. Other animals cooperate with each other as well, particularly during hunting. However, the ability of humans to cooperate with each other due to their advanced language is unparalleled in the animal kingdom. By regarding each other as friends and brothers, we invoke the sense of mutual interdependence and cooperation in society. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> also lays stress on this mutual collaboration when he writes:

“Man is a social animal and none of his affairs can be carried to completion without cooperation.” [*Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 1, pp. 205, footnote 11; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 121)

### B3. DUTY TO CALL UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Very interestingly, Islam not only demands that people should be righteous themselves but it also urges them to call others to the path of virtue, morality and decency. As the Holy Qur'an says:

وَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

And let there be among you a body of men who should **invite** to goodness, and **enjoin** equity and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper. (3:105)

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ  
تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ط

You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you **enjoin** what is good and **forbid** evil and believe in Allah... (3:111)

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ص

And **help** one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression. (5:3)

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ط

**Call** unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in a way that is best... (16:126)

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ يَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

And **keep on exhorting**; certainly exhortation benefits the believers. (51:56)

Thus, continuous exhortations in society to adopt righteousness and shun evil go a long way in establishing a culture of piety and God-fearing.

#### B4. DUTY TO CARE FOR THE AILING

In Islam, visiting the ailing, caring for them and praying for their good health and recovery are all part of faith. There are several Ahadith of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in this respect, some of which are quoted below:

" أَذْهَبِ الْبَاسَ رَبَّ النَّاسِ وَاشْفِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا  
شِفَاءَ إِلَّا شِفَاؤُكَ شِفَاءً لَا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا "

When the Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> would come to a **sick** person, he would supplicate for him and would say: "Take away the pain, O Lord of mankind, and grant healing, for Thou art the Healer, and there is no healing but Thy healing that leaves no trace of sickness." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 31, Hadith 3649*

" مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَعُودُ مُسْلِمًا غُدُوَّةً إِلَّا صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ  
مَلَكٍ حَتَّى يُمِيتَ وَإِنْ عَادَهُ عَشِيَّةً إِلَّا صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ حَتَّى  
يُصْبِحَ وَكَانَ لَهُ خَرِيفٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "No Muslim visits (a **sick**) Muslim in the morning, except that seventy thousand angels sent blessings upon him until the evening, and he does not visit at night except that seventy thousand angels sent blessing upon him until the morning, and there will be a garden for him in Paradise." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book10, Hadith 5*

" مَنْ عَادَ مَرِيضًا لَمْ يَزَلْ فِي خُرْفَةِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "He who visits the **sick** continues to remain in the fruit garden of Paradise until he returns." *Şaḥiḥ Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 50*

## B5. DUTY TO PARTAKE IN CHARITY

There is a segment of our society whose right it is to obtain charity. These include the needy, the poor, the indigent and otherwise helpless people who, for various reasons, cannot provide for themselves or their families. Thus charity, in the fullness of its meanings, is a cornerstone of a peaceful and properly functioning society. Charity applies not only to the giving away of money but also to the sharing of knowledge, imparting of advice and teaching of skills. There are several Qur'anic verses that exhort Muslims to be charitable:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ  
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۖ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَ  
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ۚ

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but *truly* righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and **spends** his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask *for charity*, and for *ransoming* the captives; ... (2:178)

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعَبًا هِيَ ۚ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ

If you give **alms** openly, it is well *and good*; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you; ... (2:272)

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ  
الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيََاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ ۚ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيَاهِهِمْ ۚ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۚ وَمَا  
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

*These alms are* for the poor who are detained in the cause of Allah and are unable to move about in the land. The ignorant man thinks them to be free from want because of *their abstaining from begging*. Thou shalt know them by their appearance; they do not beg of men with importunity. And whatever of wealth you spend, surely, Allah has perfect knowledge thereof. (2:274)

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ

قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٢٧٥﴾

And when *other* relations and orphans and the poor are present at the division of *heritage*, give them *something* therefrom and speak to them words of kindness. (4:9)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

Surely, Allah rewards the **charitable**. (12:89)

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٠﴾

(Referring to the righteous):

And in their wealth is a share belonging to the beggar and the destitute. (51:20)

In Islam, giving in charity and feeding of the poor are considered extremely noble actions. So much so, that not urging other people to feed the poor is considered a reprehensible shortcoming. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾  
وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣٥﴾

(While ushering the hell-dweller, God will say):

“Verily, he did not believe in Allah, the Great,

“And he did not **urge** the feeding of the poor. (69:34-35)

وَلَا تَحْضُونَنَا عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿١٩﴾

(God accusing human beings):

And you **urge** not one another to feed the poor. (89:19)

Thus, not only one need to be charitable themselves, but should exhort others to be charitable as well.

## B6. DUTY TO OBSERVE CHASTITY

Chastity and modesty are not only a corner stone of one's own spiritual

progress but also highly desirable elements for the existence of a pious and righteous society. Thus, use of proper clothing, keeping one's gaze down, avoidance of ogling, separation of genders and early marriages are all features of Islamic society that lay great stress on chastity and modesty.

Islamic teachings restrict free mixing of genders to avoid potentially risky situations. Islam encourages modesty of speech, modesty in dressing and modesty of sight. The purpose of chaste behaviour is to incline towards God and avoid corrupting the society.

In the context of chastity, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> mentions as to how it can be achieved and what is the underlying philosophy in Islam in segregating the genders:

“God Almighty has not only set forth excellent teaching for acquiring chastity, but has also furnished man with five remedies to safeguard himself against unchastity. These are to restrain one's eyes from gazing at women who are outside the prohibited degrees; to avoid listening to their voices, to refrain from hearing stories about them, to avoid occasions which might furnish incitement to vice and to control oneself during celibacy through fasting, etc.

We can confidently claim that this excellent teaching with all its devices that is set forth in the Holy Qur'an is peculiar to Islam. However, one point should be kept in mind: since the natural condition of man, which is the source of his appetites, and from which he cannot depart without a complete change in himself, is such that his passions are bound to be roused when they are confronted with the occasion and opportunity for indulging in such vice, God Almighty has, therefore, not instructed us that we may freely look at women outside the prohibited category, and we may contemplate their beauty and observe all their movements in dance, etc., but that we should do so with pure looks. Nor have we been instructed to listen to the singing of these women and to lend ear to the tales of their beauty, but with pure intent. Instead we have been positively prohibited from looking at their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise, or listening to their musical voices or relating descriptions of their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise. We have been directed to eschew all this as we eschew carrion, lest we stumble due to our unlawful glances.

As God Almighty desires that our eyes and hearts and all our limbs and our susceptibilities should remain pure, He has furnished us with this excellent teaching. There can be no doubt that lack of restraint causes missteps. If we place soft bread before a hungry dog, it will be vain to hope that the dog will



pay no attention to it. Thus, God Almighty desired that human faculties should not be provided with any occasion for secret functioning and should not be confronted with anything that might incite dangerous tendencies.

This indeed is the philosophy that underlies the Islamic injunctions regarding the veil, and this is what the Shariah demands. The Book of God does not aim at keeping women in captivity like prisoners. This is the thinking of the ignorant who are not aware of the Islamic ideals. The purpose of these regulations is to restrain men and women from letting their eyes rove freely and from displaying their beauty and charm, for this is to the benefit of both men and women. Remember, in Arabic *Ghaḍḍ-e-Başar* means to restrain oneself from casting even a cursory glance at the wrong place, while at the same time seeing things which are permissible.

It does not behove a pious person, who desires to keep his heart pure, that he should lift his eyes in an unbridled manner like a beast. It is necessary for such a person to cultivate the habit of *Ghaḍḍ-e-Başar* in his social life. This is a blessed habit through which a person's natural impulses are transferred into a high moral condition without adversely affecting his social needs. This is the quality which, in Islam, is called *Ihsān* or chastity." [*Islami Ūṣūl ki Philosophy, Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 10, pp. 343-344; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 330-332]

## B7. DUTY TO FULFIL COVENANTS & PROMISES

To honour the covenants, compacts, oaths and promises are oft repeated injunctions in the Holy Qur'an. In the early days of Islam, Muslims were required to honour their covenants even if they were made with the pagan people. As the Holy Qur'an states with respect to the righteous:

وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ

Those who fulfil their **promise** when they have made one... (2:178)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ۖ

O ye who believe! fulfil *your compacts*... (5:2)

لَا يُوْخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤْخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ ۖ

Allah will not call you to account for *such of* your **oaths** as are vain, but He will call you to account for the **oaths** which you take in earnest. (5:90)

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْهَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

And fulfil the **covenant** of Allah when you have made; and break not the **oaths** after making them firm, while you made Allah your surety. Certainly, Allah knows what you do. (16:92)

وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْهَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ ثُبُوتِهَا

And make not your **oaths** a means of deceit between you; or *your* foot will slip after it has been firmly established... (16:95)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Surely, success does come to the believers, ...

Who are watchful of their **trusts** and their **covenants**... (23:2, 9)

وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٦﴾

... And a **covenant** with Allah is certainly accountable for. (33:16)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

(Speaking of the people who will be honoured in the Gardens):

And those who are watchful of their **trusts** and their **covenants**,

And those who are upright in their **testimonies**, (70:33-34)

There are several injunctions by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in the context of

keeping one's covenant and promise:

" لكل غادر لواء يوم القيامة، يقال: هذه غدره فلان "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "For everyone who breaks his **covenant**, there will be a flag on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said: 'This flag proclaims a breach of **covenant** by so-and-so.'" *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1585*

" ألا لا غادر أعظم غدرًا من أمير عامة "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Behold, there will be no greater a sin with respect to breaking the **covenant** than that of a ruler who breaks his **covenant** with the Muslim masses." *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1586*

" ذِمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَاحِدَةٌ يَسْعَى بِهَا أَذْنَاهُمْ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The **covenants** of Muslims are one, it covers the rest of them<sup>20</sup>." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 21, Hadith 41*

## B8. DUTY TO COVER OF FAULTS OF OTHERS

God is the Coverer-of-Faults and, in the desire to acquire His attributes, we also need to cover the faults of others. Thus, one should avoid needless ill suspicion and should always hold good opinion with respect to other people. If we do learn about someone's weakness or fault, we should bring it to the person's attention with the sole objective of reformation and should also pray for the person. Our wish should be that the person reforms himself and that God keeps that person's weakness hidden through His mercy.

According to a Hadith:

وَمَنْ سَتَرَ عَلَى مُسْلِمٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا سَتَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ  
مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ "

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<sup>20</sup> What it means is that a covenant made by a single Muslim, on behalf of the Muslim community, is binding on all Muslims of that community and must be so honoured.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: .... “And whoever **covers** (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah will cover for him in the world and the Hereafter. And Allah is engaged in helping the worshipper as long as the worshipper is engaged in helping his brother.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 36*

## B9. DUTY TO REPAY DEBTS

Borrowing and lending are commonplace financial transactions in any society. Thus, for the smooth operation of the society, certain conditions must be followed by the borrower as well as the lender. It is the obligation of the borrower to return the borrowed item on time and it is the obligation of the lender to ease the conditions of the loan, as much as possible, particularly if the borrower is facing strained circumstances. In this context the following instructions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> are noteworthy:

إِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ - أَوْ مِنْ خَيْرِكُمْ - أَحَاسِنُكُمْ قَضَاءً

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The best of you are those who pay off their **debts** in the best manner.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 15, Hadith 2517*

مَظْلُ الْغَنِيِّ ظُلْمٌ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Wrongdoing is when a rich man takes a long time to repay his **debt**.” *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 44, Hadith 243*

"نفس المؤمن معلقة بدينه حتي يقضي عنه"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The soul of the deceased believer remains pending on account of the **debt** till it is repaid.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 943*

"يُغْفَرُ لِلشَّهِيدِ كُلُّ ذَنْبٍ إِلَّا الدَّيْنَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “All the sins of the martyr are forgiven except **debt**.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 33, Hadith 179*

"الزَّعِيمُ غَارِمٌ وَالْدَّيْنُ مَقْضِيٌّ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The guarantor is responsible and the **debt** must

be repaid.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 15, Hadith 2497*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْمَأْثِمِ وَالْمَغْرَمِ

Supplication of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>: “O Allah, I seek refuge in Thee from sin and **debt**.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 2, Hadith 490*

" مَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever is easy with a (**debtor**) who is in difficulty, Allah will be easy with him in this world and in the Hereafter.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 15, Hadith 2510*

" مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا كَانَ لَهُ بِكُلِّ يَوْمٍ صَدَقَةٌ  
وَمَنْ أَنْظَرَهُ بَعْدَ حِلِّهِ كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُهُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ صَدَقَةٌ "

“Whoever gives respite to one in difficulty, he will have (the reward of) an act of charity for each day. Whoever gives him respite after payment becomes due, will have (the reward of) an act of charity equal to each day.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 15, Hadith 2511*

"من سره أن ينجيه الله من كرب يوم القيامة، فلينفس عن معسر أو يضع عنه"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “He who likes Allah to deliver him from the calamities of the Day of Resurrection, let him either give respite to a **debtor** or grant him remission in straitened circumstances.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1369*

" كَانَ تَاجِرٌ يُدَايِنُ النَّاسَ، فَإِذَا رَأَى مُعْسِرًا قَالَ  
لِفَتْيَانِهِ تَجَاوَزُوا عَنْهُ، لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَتَجَاوَزَ عَنَّا، فَتَجَاوَزَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “There was a merchant who used to lend people, and whenever his **debtor** was in straitened circumstances, he would say to his

employees: ‘Forgive him so that Allah may forgive us’. So, Allah forgave him.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 34, Hadith 31*

## B10. DUTY TO FORGIVE & PARDON

There is a well-known adage: “To err is human, to forgive, Divine.” Human beings are the epitome of erring and it is a Divine attribute that we emulate when we forgive others for any injury done to us. Punishment and forgiveness may appear to be two diametrically opposite aspects of rendering justice. However, they are part of the system of justice. The important thing is to know as to when each should be applied. Forgiveness is better than retribution, but only if it leads to reformation. The Holy Qur’an lays great emphasis on forgiveness, as is apparent from the following verses:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ  
 الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظَيْنِ الْعِظَمِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ  
 وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And vie with one another in asking for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Paradise whose price is the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing—

Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and **pardon** men; and Allah loves those who do good; (3:134-135)

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ

... So **pardon** them and ask **forgiveness** for them... (3:160)

إِنْ تُبَدُّوْا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخَفُّوْهُ أَوْ تُعَفُّوْا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا

Whether you make public a good deed or conceal it, or **pardon** an evil, Allah is certainly the Effacer of sins *and* is All-Powerful. (4:150)

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

Take to **forgiveness**, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant. (7:200)

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۖ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

... Let them **forgive** and **forbear**. Do you not desire that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (24:23)

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso **forgives** and *his act* brings about reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers. (42:41)

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

Say to those who believe, that they exercise **forgiveness** towards those who do not expect the promised days of Allah *to come to pass*, that He may requite a people for what they earn. (45:15)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عِدًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا  
تَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

O ye who believe! surely among your wives and your children are *some that are really* your enemies, so beware of them. And if you overlook and **for-give** and **pardon**, then surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (64:15)

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also admonished the people to render forgiveness to people who do not cross legal limits:

أَقِيلُوا ذَوِي الْهَيْئَاتِ عَثَرَاتِهِمْ إِلَّا الْخُدُودَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Forgive** the people of good qualities their slips, but not faults to which prescribed penalties apply.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 40, Hadith 25*

## B11. DUTY TO BE GENEROUS

Being generous towards others—in the fullest sense of the word—is an important element in establishing a harmonious and functioning society. For this reason, Islam has placed great emphasis on observing generosity and has condemned its opposite—practising stinginess and miserliness.

In this context, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says the following:

"السَّخِيُّ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ قَرِيبٌ  
مِنَ النَّاسِ بَعِيدٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَالْبَخِيلُ بَعِيدٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ بَعِيدٌ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ  
بَعِيدٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلِجَاهِلٍ سَخِيٌّ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ  
وَجَلَّ مِنْ عَابِدٍ بَخِيلٍ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Generosity** is close to Allah, close to Paradise, close to the people and far from the Fire. **Stinginess** is far from Allah, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to Fire. The ignorant **generous** person is more beloved to Allah than the worshipping **stingy** person.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 67*

"الْمُؤْمِنُ غَرٌّ كَرِيمٌ وَالْفَاجِرُ خَبٌّ لَيْئِمٌ "



The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The believer is simple and **generous**, but the wicked is deceitful and immoral.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 18*

وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ وَمَنْ  
كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be **generous** to his neighbour. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should be **generous** to his guest.” *Al-Muwaṭṭa, Book 49, Hadith 1695*

"إِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ قَضَاءً"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The best amongst you is the one who pays the rights of others **generously**.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 40, Hadith 6*

## B12. DUTY TO BE GENTLE

Gentleness and courtesy are signs of good breeding and refinement of character. Being so, they are highly emphasised in the religion of Islam. In his Traditions, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> says:

"مَهْلًا يَا عَائِشَةُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ فِي الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said to Hazrat ‘Āīsha: “Be **gentle** and calm, O ‘Āīsha, as Allah likes **gentleness** in all affairs.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 80, Hadith 90*

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الرَّفْقَ فِي الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Allah is **Gentle** and loves **gentleness** in all things.” *Sunan Ibn Maja, Book 33, Hadith 33*

ارْفُقِي فَإِنَّ الرَّفْقَ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا زَانَهُ وَلَا نُزِعَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا شَانُهُ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Show gentleness; if **gentleness** is found in any-

thing, it beautifies it and when it is taken away from anything it damages it.”  
*Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 36*

" مَنْ يُحْرَمَ الرَّفْقَ يُحْرَمَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “He who is deprived of **gentleness** is deprived of good.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 37*

" أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَنْ يَحْرُمُ عَلَى النَّارِ أَوْ بِمَنْ تَحْرُمُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارُ  
 عَلَى كُلِّ قَرِيبٍ هَيِّنٍ لَيِّنٍ سَهْلٍ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Shall I not inform you for whom the Fire is unlawful and he is unlawful for the Fire? Every person who is accessible, **amiable** and easy (to deal with).” *Jami’ at-Tirmidhi, Book 37, Hadith 2676*

### B13. DUTY TO BE GRATEFUL

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> that “Whoever is not grateful to the people, he is not grateful to Allah.” (*Jami’ at-Tirmidhi*) Thus being grateful to people for even the smallest kindness rendered by them is the vision and characteristic of Islamic religion and culture. The Holy Qur’an, too, places great emphasis on expressing gratefulness:

وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّا يَشْكُرُهُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ

And whosoever is **grateful** is **grateful** for the good of his *own* soul;  
 (27:41)

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۖ حَسَنَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهَنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِطْلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ  
 اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ۖ

And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents—his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years—“Give

**thanks** to Me and to thy parents.” (31:15)

بَلِ اللّٰهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Aye, worship Allah and be among the **thankful**. (39:67)

## B14. DUTY TO GREET

Frequent greetings are the lubricant of a smoothly operating society. Muslims are exhorted to greet and send God’s blessings on each other when they meet. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٤﴾

And when you are **greeted** with a prayer, **greet** ye with a better prayer or *at least* return it. Surely, Allah takes account of all things. (4:87)

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

And when those who believe in Our Signs come to thee, say: “Peace be unto you!...” (6:55)

فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ

But when you enter houses, **salute** your people—a **greeting** from your Lord, full of blessing and purity... (24:62)

## B15. DUTY TO HELP

A society in which everyone is keen to help the other is a peaceful and happy society. It is for this reason that Islam lays great emphasis on helping others. The help can take several forms including finances, medical treat-

ment, education, mentoring, counselling and calling unto righteousness.

As the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said:

تُغِيثُوا الْمَلْهُوفَ

“**Help** the oppressed.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 45*

مَنْ نَقَّسَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ  
الدُّنْيَا نَقَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسِّرَ عَلَى  
مُعْسِرٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا يَسِّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

“Whoever relieves a Muslim of a burden from the burdens of the world, Allah will relieve him of a burden from the burdens on the Day of Judgment. And whoever **helps** ease a difficulty in the world, Allah will grant him ease from a difficulty in the world and in the Hereafter.” *Jami’ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 36*

وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ

“Allah is engaged in helping the worshipper as long as the worshipper is engaged in **helping** his brother.” *Jami’ at-Tirmidhi Book 27, Hadith 36*

قَالَ أَمْرَنَا

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِسَبْعِ بَعِيَادَةِ الْمَرِيضِ، وَاتِّبَاعِ الْجَنَائِزِ،  
وَتَشْمِيتِ الْعَاطِسِ، وَنَصْرِ الضَّعِيفِ، وَعَوْنِ الْمَظْلُومِ، وَإِفْشَاءِ السَّلَامِ، وَإِبرَارِ  
الْمُقْسِمِ،

It is narrated by Al-Bara’ that Allah’s Apostle ordered us to do seven (things): to visit the sic, the follow the funeral processions, to say Tashmīt to a sneezer, to **help** the weak, to **help** the oppressed ones to propagate greeting, and to **help** others to fulfil their oaths. *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Book 79, Hadith 9*

يُعِينُ الرَّجُلَ فِي دَابَّتِهِ يُحَامِلُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ يَرْفَعُ عَلَيْهَا مَتَاعَهُ صَدَقَةٌ،

“If one **helps** a person in matters concerning his riding animal by **helping** him to ride it or by lifting his luggage on to it, all this will be regarded charity.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 56, Hadith 106*

## B16. DUTY TO BE HOSPITABLE

Many cultures in the world lay great emphasis on hospitality and the Arab culture was such in which this trait was greatly admired. Stories of unusual hospitality of Hātim aṭ-Ṭāī are well known among the Muslims. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also laid great emphasis in extending hospitality towards the guest.

يُعِينُ الرَّجُلُ فِي دَابَّتِهِ يُحَامِلُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ يَرْفَعُ عَلَيْهَا مَتَاعَهُ صَدَقَةً،

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Hospitality** extends for three days, and what goes beyond that is Ṣadaqa.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 28, Hadith 14*

وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should show **hospitality** to his guest.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 80*

من استعاذ بالله فأعيذوه

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Grant shelter to him who begs for it in the name of Allah.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1723*

" إِذَا وُضِعَتِ الْمَائِدَةُ فَلَا يَقُومُ رَجُلٌ حَتَّى تُرْفَعَ الْمَائِدَةُ وَلَا يَرْفَعُ يَدَهُ وَإِنْ شَبِعَ حَتَّى يَفْرُغَ الْقَوْمُ وَلْيُعْذِرْ فَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُخْجَلُ جَلِيسُهُ فَيَقْبِضُ يَدَهُ وَعَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ فِي الطَّعَامِ حَاجَةٌ " .

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “When a meal is served, a man should not stand up until it is removed, and he should not take his hand away, even if he is full, until the people have finished. And let him continue eating, for a man may make his companion shy, causing him to withhold his hand and perhaps he has

a need for the food.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 29, Hadith 3420*

## B17. DUTY TO RENDER JUSTICE

Any judgment rendered in any decision must be based on honesty and truth or, in other words, must be carried out with due regard to justice. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۖ وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا  
بِالْعَدْلِ

Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you **judge** between men, you **judge** with **justice**. (4:59)

Rendering a judgment where self-interest or the interest of relatives is at stake can be a difficult matter. However, Muslims are exhorted to set aside all such considerations. Similarly, enmity for a people should not interfere in the rendering of justice. Thus, Muslims are enjoined to render justice with complete impartiality. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ  
الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۚ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ  
أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا ۚ وَإِنْ تَلَوْا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٦﴾

O ye who believe! be strict in observing **justice**, being witnesses for the sake of Allah, even though it be against yourselves or *against* parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both *than you are*. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may *be able to* act equitably. And if you conceal *the truth* or evade it, then *remember that* Allah is well aware of what you do. (4:136)

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ  
عَلَىٰ آلَا تَعْدِلُوْا ۖ اِعْدِلُوْا ۚ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا  
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with **justice**. Be *always* **just**, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do. (5:9)

قُلْ اَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ

Say, "My Lord has enjoined **justice**..." (7:30)

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ

Verily, Allah requires you to abide by **justice**, (16:91)

## B18. DUTY TO BE KIND & COMPASSIONATE

Observing of kindness has already been mentioned above in the context of parents, relatives, orphans and the needy. Application of spontaneous kindness and showing of compassion and sympathy is the vision of true Islamic society. Any society that is bereft of sympathy and kindness is not a society of human beings.

Some of the Ahadith exhorting Muslims to show compassion and sympathy towards fellow kind are given below:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَفِيْقٌۭ يُحِبُّ الرِّفْقَ، وَيُعْطِيْ عَلَيْهِ مَا لَا يُعْطِيْ عَلَى الْعُنْفِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Allah is Compassionate and loves compassion. He gives for **compassion** what He does not give for harshness." *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, Book 26, Hadith 11

مَنْ يُحْرَمِ الرِّفْقَ يُحْرَمِ الْخَيْرَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever is denied **compassion** is denied good.”  
*Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 26, Hadith 2*

وَإِنَّمَا يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الرَّحْمَاءَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Allah shows compassion only to those of His servants who are **compassionate**.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 21, Hadith 37*

" إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مِائَةً

رَحْمَةً قَسَمَ مِنْهَا رَحْمَةً بَيْنَ جَمِيعِ الْخَلَائِقِ فِيهَا يَتَرَاحُمُونَ وَبِهَا يَتَعَاطَفُونَ وَبِهَا  
تُعْطِفُ الْوَحْشُ عَلَى أَوْلَادِهَا وَأَخْرَ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ رَحْمَةً يَرْحَمُ بِهَا عِبَادَهُ يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ . "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Allah has one hundred (parts of) mercy, of which He has shared one between all of creation, by virtue of which you show mercy and **compassion** towards one another and the wild animals show compassion towards their young. And He has kept back ninety-nine (parts of) mercy by virtue of which He will show mercy to His slaves on the Day of Resurrection.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4434*

## B19. DUTY TO BE MERCIFUL

Mercy is an attribute of God and being merciful towards others is highly desirable in Islam. Being merciful means being kind, forgiving, sympathetic, lenient and benevolent towards others. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has several exhortations in this context:

" مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ النَّاسَ لَا يَرْحَمُهُ اللَّهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever does not show **mercy** to the people, Allah will not show **mercy** to him.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 28*

مَنْ رَحِمَ وَلَوْ ذَبِيحَةً، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.



The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Anyone who shows **mercy**, even to an animal meant for slaughtering, will be shown **mercy** by Allah on the Day of Rising.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 20, Hadith 10*

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِائَةَ رَحْمَةٍ كُلُّ رَحْمَةٍ طَبَاقٌ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَجَعَلَ  
مِنْهَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَحْمَةً فِيهَا تَعْطِفُ الْوَالِدَةُ عَلَى وَلَدِهَا وَالْوَحْشُ وَالطَّيْرُ بَعْضُهَا  
عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ أَكْمَلَهَا بِهَذِهِ الرَّحْمَةِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Verily, Allah created, on the same very day when He created the heavens and the earth, one hundred parts of **mercy**. Every part of mercy is coextensive with the space between the heavens and the earth and it is because of this that the mother shows affection to her child and even the beasts and birds show kindness to one another and when there would be the Day of Resurrection, Allah would make full (use of **mercy**).” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 50, Hadith 25*

" لَا تُنْزَعُ الرَّحْمَةُ إِلَّا مِنْ شَقِيٍّ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Mercy** is not removed except from a wicked one.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 29*

" الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ ارْحَمُوا أَهْلَ الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “If you show **mercy** to those who are on earth, He Who is in the heaven will show **mercy** to you.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 169*

لما خلق الله الخلق، كتب في كتاب، فهو عنده فوق العرش: إن رحمتي تغلب  
غضبي

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “When Allah created the creatures, He wrote in the Book, which is with Him over His Throne: ‘Verily, My **Mercy** prevailed over My Wrath.’” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī & Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 419*

## B20. DUTY TO ESTABLISH PEACE

Being a peaceful religion, Islam places great emphasis in the establishment of peace in society and on reconciliation between inimical factions. Thus, Islam exhorts to establish resolution between husband and wife, between two factions that are fighting, and to maintain peace in the country and land that we live in. In this context, the following Qur'anic quotes are notable:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِن يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And if you fear a breach between them (husband and wife), then appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire **reconciliation**, Allah will affect it between them. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (4:36)

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيَّءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿١٠﴾  
إِنَّا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

And if two parties of believers fight, make **peace** between them; then if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make **peace** between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just.

Surely, *all* believers are brothers. So make **peace** between brothers, and fear Allah that mercy may be shown to you. (49:10-11)

## B21. DUTY TO SHUN EVIL & VICE

While Muslims are exhorted to do all kinds of acts of righteousness, they are also admonished to shun acts that are evil and wicked. Examples of such vices include: abuse, anger, avarice and greed, backbiting, begging, bribery, calumny, envy, extravagance, false accusation, fornication, hypocrisy, jealousy, miserliness, murder, oppression, pride, revenge, slander, stealing, suspicion, and vanity.

## B22. DUTY TO SPEND IN THE WAY OF GOD

To spend in the way of God is a recurring theme in the Holy Qur'an and a constant reminder in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Spending in the way of God serves two very important purposes. Firstly, it cleanses the wealth and property of the giver by moving him away from worldly attachments and inclining him towards spirituality, and secondly, it fulfils the requirements of the poor and the needy. Following are some of the injunctions in the Holy Qur'an with respect to spending in the way of God:

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

And **spend** for the cause of Allah. (2:196)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَ  
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ

They ask thee what they shall **spend**. Say, "Whatever of good and abundant wealth you **spend** should be for parents and near relatives and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer." (2:216)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۖ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ

And they ask thee what they should **spend**. Say, "What you can spare." (2:220)

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضِعَّهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً ط

Who is it that will lend Allah a goodly **loan** that He may multiply it for him manifold? (2:246)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ط

O ye who believe! render not vain your **alms** by taunt and injury, like him who **spends** his wealth to be seen of men, and he believes not in Allah and the Last Day.... (2:265)

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ط

Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you **spend** out of that which you love. (3:93)

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظَيْنِ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ط

(With respect to the God-fearing):

Those who **spend** in prosperity and adversity, and those who suppress anger and pardon men; (3:135)

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا

يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

And those who hoard up gold and silver and **spend** it not in the way of Allah—give to them the tidings of a painful punishment... (9:34)

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ط

No blame lies on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who find naught to **spend**, if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger. (9:91)

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمُ الدَّوَائِرَ ۖ عَلَيْهِمْ  
دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾  
وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَاتٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ  
صَلَاتِ الرَّسُولِ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَّهُمْ ۖ سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ

And among the Arabs of the Bedouin are those who consider what they **spend** in the cause of Allah a penalty and wishfully await calamities to befall you. Let evil befall them instead. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

And among the Arabs of the desert are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard that which they **spend** as means of drawing near to Allah and of receiving the blessings of the Prophet. Aye! It is for them certainly a means of drawing near to God. Allah will soon admit them to His mercy... (9:98-99)

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

Take **alms** out of their wealth, so that thou mayest cleanse them and purify them thereby... (9:103)

قُلْ لِّلْعِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّنْ  
قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَافٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

Say to My servants who have believed, that they should observe Prayer and **spend** out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, before there comes a day wherein there will be neither bargaining nor friendship. (14:32)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾

(Referring to the servants of the Gracious God):

And those who, when they **spend**, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but moderate between the two; (25:68)

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤَآءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَمِمَّنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَبْخُلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ  
فَإِنَّا يَبْخُلْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ ۚ

Behold, you are those who are called upon to **spend** in the way of Allah; but of you there are some who are niggardly. And whoso is niggardly, is niggardly only against his own soul. And Allah is Self-Sufficient, and it is you that are needy... (47:39)

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۚ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَّا آتَاهَا ۚ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ۖ

Let him who has abundance of means **spend** out of his abundance. And let him whose means of subsistence are straitened **spend** out of what Allah has given him. Allah burdens not any soul beyond that which He has given it. Allah will soon bring about ease after hardship. (65:8)

Spending in the way of God is an entire institution in Islam. The following inferences can be drawn from the various Qur'anic verses cited above:

- Spending for the love of God is true righteousness (2:178)
- Spending is for yourself, the kindred, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, the beggars, the captives and the parents (2:178; 2:216; 2:273)
- Spend out of good and abundant wealth (2:216; 2:268)
- Spend out of what can be spared (2:220)
- Spending in the way of Allah is a goodly loan to Him that shall be multiplied manifold (2:246; 2:262; 57:12; 57:19; 64:18)
- Spending should not be followed by taunt and injury (2:263, 265)

- Spending should not be for the purpose of showing off (2:265)
- It is Satan who inspires niggardliness (2:269)
- Spending should be done secretly as well as openly (2:275; 13:23; 14:32; 35:30)
- Spending in the form of alms is better done secretly (2:272)
- Spending is a requirement for achieving righteousness (3:93)
- Spend out of that which you love (3:93)
- Spending to be carried out during prosperity as well as during adversity (3:134-135; 65:8)
- Niggardliness and not spending in the way of God will lead one to the punishment of hell (9:34)
- There is no blame for the one who has nothing to spend as long as he is sincere (9:91)
- Giving of alms cleanses the person (9:103; 92:19)
- Spending to be done without being extravagant or niggardly—but rather moderately (25:68)

### **B23. DUTY TO STRIVING IN THE CAUSE OF GOD**

The Arabic word for exerting an effort or doing struggle and striving is *Jihād*. Thus, undertaking *Jihād* or striving in the cause of God, is a duty to God, a social responsibility and means of achieving personal spirituality. Such struggle may consist of fighting in defence of the faith, or helping the faith through financial sacrifices, or helping the faith through preaching and sermonising, or labouring hard to advance one's own spiritual development and training.

As the entire life of a person is a constant struggle, the Holy Qur'an lays great emphasis on striving in the cause of God:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ

الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

Do you suppose that you will enter Heaven while Allah has not yet distinguished those of you that **strive in the way of Allah** and has not yet distin-



guished the steadfast? (3:143)

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۖ وَلَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى ۖ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾  
 دَرَجَتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۖ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٧﴾

Those of the believers who sit *still*, excepting the disabled ones, and those who **strive** in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their persons, are not equal. Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their wealth and their persons above those who sit *still*. And to each Allah has promised good. And Allah has exalted those who **strive** above those who sit *still*, by a great reward,

*Namely, by degrees of excellence bestowed by Him, and by special forgiveness and mercy. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (4:96-97)*

لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾  
 إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day will not ask leave of thee *to be exempted* from **striving** with their property and their persons. And Allah well knows the righteous.

Only those will ask leave of thee *to be exempted* who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are full of doubt, and in their doubt they waver. (9:44-45)



إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۖ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبِشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١١﴾

Surely, Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their property in return for the Paradise they shall have—they **fight** in the cause of Allah, and they slay and are slain—a promise *that He has made* incumbent on Himself in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who is more faithful to his promise than Allah? Rejoice, then, in your bargain which you have made with Him; and that it is which is the supreme triumph. (9:111)

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۖ

And **strive** in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it... (22:79)

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

And whoso **strives**, strives only for his own soul; verily Allah is Independent of the entire universe. (29:7)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِحَوَارِيِّنَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ

O ye who believe! be helpers of Allah, as said Jesus, son of Mary, to *his* disciples, “Who are my helpers in *the cause of Allah*.” The disciples said, “We are helpers of Allah.” (61:15)

## B24. DUTY TO PROVIDE TRUTHFUL TESTIMONY

Another aspect of being truthful and honest is to give correct and accu-

rate testimony when being called as a witness. As is exhorted in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا<sup>ط</sup>

And **witnesses** should not refuse when they are called. (2:283)

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ<sup>ط</sup> وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ<sup>ط</sup>

And conceal not **testimony**; and whoever conceals it, his heart is certainly sinful. (2:284)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ<sup>ج</sup>

O ye who believe! Be strict in observing **justice**, and be **witnesses** for Allah even though it be against yourselves or *against* parents and kindred. (4:136)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ<sup>ج</sup>

O ye who believe! be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing **witness** in equity; (5:9)

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ<sup>ج</sup>

And when you speak, observe **justice**, even if *the concerned person* be a relative. (6:153)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ<sup>لا</sup>

(Speaking of the people who will be honoured in the Gardens):  
And those who are upright in their **testimonies**, (70:34)

## B25. DUTY TO DISCHARGE TRUSTS

Anything being kept in trust, must be made over to the rightful owner.

As the Holy Qur'an directs:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا<sup>ل</sup>

Verily, Allah commands you to make over the **trusts** to those entitled to them.... (4:59)

## B26. DUTY REGARDING TRUTH

Honesty and truthfulness—in the broadest sense of the words—are the cornerstone of any harmonious and just society. As the Holy Qur'an says:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

And confound not **truth** with falsehood nor hide the **truth**, knowingly. (2:43)

فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿١٠﴾

Let them, therefore, fear Allah and let them say the **right** word. (4:10)

وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ<sup>ط</sup>

And say to My servants that they should speak that which is **best**... (17:54)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٦١﴾

O ye who believe! fear Allah, and say the **right word**. (33:71)

Truth is commonly considered to be something which is in accord with reality or fact. It pertains to a statement, which can be verified to be accurate in its meaning and implications. However, the idea of a true statement also implies that the statement is complete, true in its entirety and that nothing significant has been withheld from it. In other words, complete "justice" has been observed when such a statement has been made.

## B27. DUTY TO WEIGH AND MEASURE CORRECTLY

Another aspect of honesty relates to correctness of weighing and measuring during the purchase and sale of goods and property. As the Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْإِيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ؕ

And give full **measure** and **weight** with equity... (6:153)

فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْإِيْزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ

[The directive of the Prophet Shu'aib to his people]:

“So give full **measure** and full **weight**, and do not give people less than what rightfully belongs to them...” (7:86)

وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ ؕ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

And give full **measure** when you measure, and **weigh** with a right balance; that is best and most commendable in the end. (17:36)

أَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْبَخْسِإِنِ

وَزِنُوا بِالْقِسْطِ الْمُسْتَقِيمِ

وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

Give full **measure**, and be not of those who give less,

And **weigh** with a true balance,

And do not pay people less than the true value of things, nor act corruptly in the earth, making mischief. (26:182-184)

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْإِيْزَانَ

So **weigh** all things in justice and fall not short of the **measure**. (55:10)

وَيْلٌ لِلْبَاطِفِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾  
الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾  
وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

Woe unto those who give short **measure**;  
Those who, when they take by **measure** from other people, take it full;  
But when they give by **measure** to others or **weigh** to them, they give  
*them* less. (83:2-4)

## *Chapter 3*

# OBLIGATIONS TO OUR SELVES

### [*Hūqūq-un-nafs*—Rights of the Self]

## INTRODUCTION

**B**eside our obligations to God and members of our society, there are many duties that an individual owes to one's own self. Some of these duties relate to the physical well being of the individual and some relate to one's spiritual state and eventual salvation. In the first category, we could place duties such as observing cleanliness and purity, seeking of knowledge, good companionship, patience, perseverance, steadfastness, reflection, pondering and reasoning. In the second category, we could include repentance and seeking of God's forgiveness, piety and righteousness, and obtaining nearness, pleasure and love of God.

Among the duties to one's own self we could also include the *avoidance* of everything that is evil, wrong and sinful—such as adultery, apostasy, backbiting, bad company, boasting, bribery, deceit, disobedience, drinking, embezzlement, gambling, greed, haughtiness, idolatry, immoderation, interest and usury, mischief-making, niggardliness, pride, rebellion, slothfulness, boasting, ungratefulness and waywardness—to name some.

Muslim scholars have also mentioned the rights of the self in the context of individual body parts. Thus, the right of our tongue is that we refrain from uttering obscenity, falsehood and calumny and use it strictly for the purpose of expressing words of kindness and truth. Similarly, the right of our ears is that we keep them from listening to vain speech, idle talk and backbiting. The right of our eyes is that we lower them in front of everything that is unlawful and use them for seeing the face of God in nature. The right of the hands is that we do not extend them to inflict injury or to accept something that is forbidden. The right of the legs is that we do not walk towards unlawful objects and save them from spiritual slips and falls. The right of the stomach is that we do not fill it to capacity and feed it only what is lawful in Islam. Likewise, there are rights of the private parts that we

guard them against indecency and lewdness. Our mind has a right that we think of noble thoughts and ponder over the vast and amazing creations of God. Our hearts have a right on us that we keep them polished and pure for the descent of the Divine.

Below, we will discuss briefly some specific rights that we owe to our own selves, which would promote righteousness and piety and make us a better individual.

## 1. DUTY TO BE CHEERFUL

Being cheerful and maintaining a lively disposition is not only beneficial to the people around us but also an important element for our own happiness and well-being. The following words of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> are relevant on the subject:

ولا تحقرن من  
المعروف شيئاً، وأن تكلم أخاك وأنت منبسط إليه وجهك؛ إن ذلك من  
المعروف.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Do not hold in contempt even an insignificant act of goodness, because even talking to your brother with a **cheerful** countenance is an act of goodness.” *Riyāduṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 796*

" إِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ فَتَقَسُّوْا لَهُ فِي الْأَجْلِ فَإِنَّ  
ذَلِكَ لَا يَرُدُّ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ يَطِيبُ بِنَفْسِ الْمَرِيضِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “When you enter upon one who is sick, **cheer** him up and give him hope of a long life, for that does not change anything (of Divine Decree), but it will **cheer** the heart of the one who is sick.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 6, Hadith 1505*

إِنَّكُمْ لَا تَسْعُونَ النَّاسَ  
بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ لِيَسْعَهُمْ بَسْطُ الْوَجْهِ، وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “You cannot satisfy people with your wealth, but

satisfy them with your **cheerful** faces and good morals.” *Bulūgh al-Marām, Book 16, Hadith 1534*

وَطَيْبُ النَّفْسِ مِنَ التَّعَمُّ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Being of good **cheer** is a blessing.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 12, Hadith 2224*

## 2. DUTY TO BE CLEAN AND PURE

Physical cleanliness, purity and good health are highly emphasised in Islam. One needs to perform ablution prior to undertaking Prayers. Verses of the Holy Qur’an and sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> relate several situations when physical cleanliness and purity needs to be considered. These situations include menstrual discharge, conjugal relations and calls of nature. In the religion of Islam, physical cleanliness is a stepping stone towards spiritual purity. In the context of cleanliness, spiritual purity is the ultimate objective. It includes not only the purity of actions but also purity of thoughts and intentions.

Cleanliness is also mentioned in the Holy Qur’an where it says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Allah loves those who turn to Him and loves those who keep themselves **clean**. (2:223)

Again, with reference to the soul, the Holy Qur’an exhorts:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

“He indeed *truly* prospers who **purifies** it.” (91:10)

Spiritual considerations aside, Muslims are prohibited from indulging in activities that would even cause or lead to poor physical health. Thus, Muslims are required to refrain from drinking and other things that would cause



intoxication; they are required to eat in moderation; they are prompted to brush their teeth frequently and there are directives in the Hadiths as to appropriate actions to take in the case of epidemics.

إِنَّهُ لَا بَأْسَ بِالْغِنَى لِمَنِ اتَّقَى، وَالصَّحَّةُ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْغِنَى

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “There is no harm in wealth for someone who has *taqwa*, but **health** for the person who has *taqwa* is even better than wealth.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 1, Hadith 301*

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضَغَةً، إِذَا صَلَحَتْ، صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ،  
وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Beware! In the body there is a piece of flesh; if it becomes sound and **healthy**, the whole body becomes sound and healthy. But if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt. It is the heart.” *Bulūgh al-Marām, Book 16, Hadith 1468*

### 3. DUTY TO BE CONTENTED

While striving for better things in life is quite justified, being greedy and avaricious leads to discontentment, restlessness and unhappiness. Thus, learning to be content with what one has is an important and beneficial trait. The Holy Qur’an teaches us a prayer of the contented people:

وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ  
فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

(The prayer of the contented):

“**Sufficient** for us is Allah—and His Messenger; surely Allah will bestow on us of His bounty; to Allah do we turn in supplication.” (9:59)

There are also several sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> with respect to being contented:

وَارْضَ بِمَا قَسَمَ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَكُنْ أَغْنَى النَّاسِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Be **satisfied** with what Allah has given you and you shall be the richest of the people.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 36, Hadith 2*

"لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرِضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Richness is not an abundance of worldly goods, rather richness is **contentment** with one’s lot.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4276*

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ هُدِيَ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَرَزِقَ الْكَفَافَ وَقَنِعَ بِهِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “He has succeeded who is guided to Islam and is granted sufficient provision and is **content** with it.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4277*

لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرِضِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Wealth does not mean having a lot of property. Wealth means having **self-contentment**.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 1, Hadith 276*

"ذَاقَ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ مَنْ رَضِيَ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولًا"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “He has found the taste of faith who is **content** with Allah as his Lord, with Islam as his religion and with Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> as his Prophet.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 58*

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى، وَالتَّقَى، وَالْعِفَافَ، وَالْغِنَى"

Supplication of the Holy Prophet: “I beseech Thee for guidance, piety, chastity and **contentment**.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 17, Hadith 1468*

كُنْ وَرِعًا تَكُنْ أَعْبَدَ النَّاسِ وَكُنْ قَنِيعًا تَكُنْ  
أَشْكَرَ النَّاسِ وَأَحَبَّ لِلنَّاسِ مَا تُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِكَ تَكُنْ مُؤْمِنًا وَأَحْسَنَ جَوَارَ مَنْ  
جَاوَرَكَ تَكُنْ مُسْلِمًا

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Be cautious, and you will be the most devoted of people to Allah. Be **content**, and you will be the most grateful of people to Allah. Love for people what you love for yourself, and you be a true believer. Be a good neighbour to your neighbours, and you well be a true Muslim.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4357*

طَعَامُ الرَّجُلِ يَكْفِي رَجُلَيْنِ وَطَعَامُ رَجُلَيْنِ يَكْفِي أَرْبَعَةً وَطَعَامُ أَرْبَعَةٍ يَكْفِي ثَمَانِيَةً

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Food for one person **suffices** two persons and food for two persons **suffices** four persons, and food for four persons **suffices** eight persons.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 245*

" مَنْ سَأَلَ وَلَهُ مَا يُغْنِيهِ  
جَاءَتْ مَسْأَلَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ خُدُوشًا أَوْ حُمُوشًا أَوْ كُدُوحًا فِي وَجْهِهِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Whoever begs when he has enough to **suffice** him, his begging will come on the Day of Resurrection like lacerations on his face.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 8, Hadith 58*

#### 4. DUTY TO KEEP GOOD COMPANY & FRIENDS

Human beings are social animals and as such need companionship. However, the type of companionship and friendship that one indulges in has a great impact not only on one’s secular well-being but also one’s spiritual condition. Emphasis on good companionship is the hallmark of Islam. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ  
فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ

Let not the believers take disbelievers for **friends** in preference to believers—and whoever does that has no connection with Allah... (3:29)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا ۖ وَدُّوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ  
 قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ ۚ  
 هَآنَتْكُمْ أَوْلَاءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ

O ye who believe! Take not others than your own people as intimate **friends**; they will not fail to corrupt you. They love to see you in trouble. Hatred has already shown itself through the utterances of their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater still...

Behold, you are those who love them, but they love you not... (3:119-120)

In this context, the following Ahadith are noteworthy:

المرء مع من أحب

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “A person will be in the **company** of those whom he loves.” *Riyāduṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 368*

خَيْرُ الْأَصْحَابِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِصَاحِبِهِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The **companion** who is best to Allah is the one who is best to his **companion**.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 50*

"مَثَلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْجَلِيسِ السَّوِّ كَمَثَلِ  
 صَاحِبِ الْمِسْكِ، وَكَبِيرِ الْحَدَّادِ، لَا يَعْدُمُكَ مِنْ صَاحِبِ الْمِسْكِ إِلَّا مَا تَشْتَرِيهِ، أَوْ  
 تَجِدُ رِيحَهُ، وَكَبِيرِ الْحَدَّادِ يُحْرِقُ بَدَنَكَ أَوْ ثَوْبَكَ أَوْ تَجِدُ مِنْهُ رِيحًا خَبِيثَةً."

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The example of a good **companion** in comparison to a bad one is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith’s bellows. From the former you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the bellows would either burn your clothes or your house or you get a bad nasty smell thereof.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 34,*

### Hadith 54

Islam lays great emphasis on the acquiring of good company. According to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, keeping of good company is one of the means of achieving one's purpose in life. As he<sup>as</sup> writes:

“The seventh means of achieving the purpose of life is keeping company with the righteous and to follow their example.” [*Islāmī Ūṣūl ki Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 10, pp. 415-422; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 469]

## 5. DUTY TO BE HUMBLE AND MEEK

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly emphasises the point that only God is great and that the position of man in the scheme of things is that of meekness and humility. Being proud and haughty is the trait of Satan and the Muslims are constantly exhorted to shun it. In this context, the following verses of the Holy Qur'an are relevant:

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّهَا كَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And seek help with patience and Prayer; and this indeed is hard except for the **humble** in spirit. (2:46)

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَنِتَّةِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٨﴾

[Speaking of the God-fearing and the righteous]:

The steadfast, and the truthful, and the **humble**, and those who spend in the way of God, and those who seek forgiveness in the latter part of the night. (3:18)

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Call upon your Lord in **humility** and in secret. Surely, He does not love the transgressors. (7:56)

وَإِذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَ  
لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

And remember thy Lord in thy mind with **humility** and fear, and without loudness of speech, in the mornings and evenings; and be not of the neglectful.

Truly, those who are near to thy Lord, turn not away with **pride** from His worship, but they glorify Him and prostrate themselves before Him. (7:206-207)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآخَبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

Verily, those who believe and do good works, and **humble** themselves before their Lord—these are the inmates of Heaven; therein shall they abide. (11:24)

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾  
الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ  
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

... And give thou glad tidings to the **humble**,

Whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned, and who patiently endure whatever befalls them, and who observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them. (22:35-36)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خُشْعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Surely, success does come to the believers,  
Who are **humble** in their Prayers,  
And who shun all that which is vain, (23:2-4)

The Ahadith of the Holy Prophet also lay great emphasis on being meek and humble, as shown below:

اِحْتَجَّتِ النَّارُ وَالْجَنَّةُ  
فَقَالَتْ هَذِهِ يَدْخُلُنِي الْجَبَّارُونَ وَالْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ . وَقَالَتْ هَذِهِ يَدْخُلُنِي الضُّعَفَاءُ  
وَالْمَسَاكِينُ

Allah's Messenger<sup>sa</sup> said: "There was a dispute between Hell and Paradise and the Hell said: 'The haughty and the proud would find abode in me.' And the Paradise said: 'The **meek** and the **humble** would find their abode in me'." *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 53, Hadith 41*

وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ

Allah's Messenger<sup>sa</sup> said: "...The one who shows **humility**, Allah elevates him in the estimation of the people." *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 90*

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ أَنْ تَوَاضَعُوا حَتَّى لَا يَبْغِيَ أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ، وَلَا  
يَفْخَرُ أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ"

The Messenger<sup>sa</sup> of Allah said: "Verily, Allah has revealed to me that you should adopt **humility**. So that no one may wrong another and no one may be

disdainful and haughty towards another.” *Riḡaḡuṣ-Ṣaliḡhīn, Hadith 1589*

وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ

The Messenger<sup>sa</sup> of Allah said: “... None **humbles** himself for Allah but Allah raises him.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 135*

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى  
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَتَعَوَّذُ مِنْ أَرْبَعٍ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ  
وَدُعَاءٍ لَا يُسْمَعُ وَنَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ.

It was narrated by ‘Abdullah bin Amr<sup>ra</sup> that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used to seek refuge from four things: From knowledge that is of no benefit; from a heart that does not feel **humble**; from a supplication that is not heard; and a soul that is never satisfied. *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 50, Hadith 15*

- وعن قيلة بنت مخرمة رضى الله عنها قالت: رأيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو قاعد القرفصاء، فلما رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم المتخشع في الجلسة أريدت من الفرق.

Qailah bint Makhramah<sup>ra</sup> reported: “I saw the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> seated with his arms enfolded around his legs; and when I saw him in such a state of **humbleness**, I trembled with fear due to the awe (he showed in that posture).” *Riḡaḡuṣ-Ṣaliḡhīn, Hadith 823*

## 6. DUTY TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE & EDUCATION

One of the greatest service that one can render to one’s own self is to gain education and knowledge. The distinction between right and wrong, true recognition of the Lord of the universe, and proper appreciation of the myriad attributes of God, all require erudition, learning and wisdom. It is for this reason that knowledge and education are highly regarded and em-



phasised in the teachings of Islam. As it exhorts in the Holy Qur'an:

قُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٥﴾

Say: "O my Lord, increase me in **knowledge**." (20:115)

There are numerous sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> on the subject of knowledge and learning, some of which are given below:

" سَلُوا اللَّهَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا وَتَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Ask Allah for beneficial **knowledge** and seek refuge with Allah from knowledge that is of no benefit." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 34, Hadith 17*

لَا يُسْتَطَاعُ الْعِلْمُ بِرَاحَةِ الْجِسْمِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "**Knowledge** cannot be acquired with sloth." *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 5, Hadith 224*

" طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَوَاضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ  
كَمُقَلَّدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Seeking **knowledge** is a duty upon every Muslim, and he who imparts **knowledge** to those who do not deserve it, is like one who puts a necklace of jewels, pearls and gold around the necks of swines." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 1, Hadith 229*

" الْعَالِمُ وَالْمُتَعَلِّمُ شَرِيكَانِ فِي الْأَجْرِ وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي سَائِرِ النَّاسِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The scholar and the seeker of **knowledge** will share the reward, and there is no good in the rest of the people." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 1, Hadith 233*

"مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Whoever goes out seeking **knowledge**, then he is in Allah's cause until he returns." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 41, Hadith 3*

"أَفْضَلُ الصَّدَقَةِ أَنْ يَتَعَلَّمَ الْمَرْءُ الْمُسْلِمُ عِلْمًا ثُمَّ يَعْلَمَهُ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The best of charity is when a Muslim man gains **knowledge**, then he teaches it to his Muslim brother." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 1, Hadith 250*

الملائكة لتضع أجنحتها لطالب العلم رضا بما صنع، وفضل العالم على العابد  
كفضل القمر على سائر الكواكب، وإن العلماء ورثة الأنبياء وإن الأنبياء لم  
يورثوا دينارًا ولا درهما وإنما ورثوا العلم. فمن أخذه أخذ بحظ وافر

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The angels lower their wings of mercy over the seeker of **knowledge**, being pleased with what he does.... The superiority of the **learned** man over the devout worshipper is like that of the full moon to the rest of the stars. The **learned** are the heirs of the prophets who bequeath neither dinar nor dirham but only that of **knowledge**, and he who acquires it, has in fact acquired an abundant portion." *Riyāduṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1388*

"وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Allah makes the way to Paradise easy for him who treads the path in search of **knowledge**." *Riyāduṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 1381*

إِنَّهُ لَيَسْتَغْفِرُ لِلْعَالَمِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الْحَيَّاتِ فِي الْبَحْرِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Everyone in the universe, in the heavens and on earth, prays for forgiveness for the **scholar**, even the fish in the sea." *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 1, Hadith 245*

نَضَرَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا  
سَمِعَ مَقَالَتِي فَبَلَّغَهَا قُرْبَ حَامِلٍ فَقِهِ غَيْرُ فَقِيهِ وَرُبَّ حَامِلٍ فَقِهِ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ  
أَفْقَهُ مِنْهُ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “May Allah make his face shine, the man who hears my words and conveys them. It may be that the bearer of **knowledge** does not understand it, and it may be that he takes it to one who will understand it more than he does.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 25, Hadith 3172*

The gaining of knowledge applies to both the secular and the spiritual fields. It is not possible to look at the universe correctly without the aid of revelation and it is not possible to interpret the Words of God without adequate knowledge of the secular sphere. All knowledge is acquired in stages, which are described in the Holy Qur’an with increasing level of certainty as:

- ‘*Īlmul Yaqīn* (Certain Knowledge)—102:7
- ‘*Ainul Yaqīn* (The Eye of Certainty)—102:8
- ‘*Haqqul Yaqīn* (True Certainty)—69:50

The word “knowledge” has a much deeper and profounder aspect to it which we refer to as wisdom and “perfect understanding”. In the absence of perfect understanding, superficial knowledge is of little use if not in fact dangerous. One’s effort, therefore, should be directed at obtaining wisdom and perfect knowledge of things. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> lays great emphasis in the acquisition of what he calls “perfect understanding”. According to him, this is essential for obtaining salvation. As he writes in his book, *Lecture Lahore*:

O my dears! It is a true and tried philosophy that to escape sin, man needs perfect understanding and not any type of atonement. I tell you truly that if the people of Noah had attained the perfect understanding which creates perfect fear, they would not have been drowned, if the people of Lot had been bestowed that understanding, they would not have been subjected to a rain of

stones, and if this country had been bestowed that recognition of the Divine Being which makes one tremble with fear, it would not have suffered ruin from the plague as it did. But deficient understanding yields no benefits, nor can its result, which is fear and love, be perfect. The faith that is not perfect is useless and the love that is not perfect is useless, and the fear that is not perfect is useless, and the understanding that is not perfect is useless, and the food and drink that are not perfect are useless....

The root of fear and love and appreciation is perfect understanding. He who is bestowed perfect understanding is bestowed perfect fear and perfect love, and he who is bestowed perfect fear and perfect love is delivered from every sin which arises from fearlessness. [*Lecture Lahore, Rūhāni Khazā'in*, vol. 20, pp. 150-151; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 253]

It should be noted that for the gaining of secular knowledge, righteousness is not a prerequisite. However, for the gaining of spiritual knowledge and proper comprehension of the Book of God, righteousness is essential. As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says in the *Malḡūzāt*:

“On the other hand righteousness is an essential condition for heavenly learning and for acquiring knowledge of the mysteries of the Holy Qur’an. For this purpose, sincere repentance is needed. For the door of Qur’anic knowledge is not opened until a seeker of it carries the burden of Divine commands with perfect humility and meekness and turns to Him humbly, trembling before His glory and His might. Without these, he cannot obtain from the Holy Qur’an the means of fostering those qualities and faculties, which generate delight and comfort for the soul. The Holy Qur’an is the Book of God and its knowledge is in the hand of God; thus righteousness is the ladder for the acquisition of such knowledge.” [*Malḡūzāt*, vol. I, pp. 425-427; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 350]

## 7. DUTY TO HAVE GOOD MANNERS

It is one’s duty to one’s self to inculcate good manners and character. While dealing with others, the most obvious thing about a person is the quality of manners and behaviour. In this context, the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> have several admonitions:

مَا تَعُدُّونَ الْحَسَبَ؟ أَفْضَلُكُمْ حَسَبًا أَحْسَنُكُمْ خُلُقًا

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The best of you in lineage is the best of you in **character**.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 38, Hadith 12*

“ألا أخبركم بمن يحرم على النار -أو بمن تحرم عليه النار؟- تحرم على كل قريب هين لين سهل”

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Shall I not tell you whom the Fire is forbidden to touch? It is forbidden to touch a man who is always accessible, having **polite** and tender nature.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi; Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣaliḥīn, Hadith 642*

" خَصْلَتَانِ لَا تَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ الْبُخْلُ وَسُوءُ الْخُلُقِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Two traits are not combined in a believer: stinginess and bad **manners**.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 68*

" خَصْلَتَانِ لَا تَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي مُنَافِقٍ حُسْنُ سَمْتٍ وَلَا فِقْهُ فِي الدِّينِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Two things will not be together in a hypocrite: good **manners** and *Fiqh* in the religion.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi, Book 41, Hadith 40*

" أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيْمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The most perfect believer in respect of Faith is he who is best of them in **manners**.” *Sunan Abu Da‘ūd, Book 42, Hadith 87*

" لَا عَقْلَ كَالْتَدْبِيرِ وَلَا وَرَعَ كَالْكَفِّ وَلَا حَسَبَ كَحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “There is no wisdom like reflection, and no honour like good **manners**.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4358*

" مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "There is no gift that a father gives his son more virtuous than good **manners**." *Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book 27, Hadith 58*

البر حسن الخلق، والإثم ما حاك في نفسك،  
وكرهت أن يطلع عليه الناس

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Piety is good **manner**, and sin is that which creates doubt and you do not like people to know of it." *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 590*

" إِنَّ مِنْ أَحَبِّكُمْ إِلَيَّ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "The most beloved to me amongst you is the one who has the best character and **manners**." *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Book 62, Hadith 106*

ما من شيء أثقل في ميزان المؤمن يوم القيامة من حسن  
الخلق، وإن الله يبغض الفاحش البذي

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "Nothing will be heavier on the Day of Resurrection in the scale of the believer than good **manners**. Allah hates one who utters foul or coarse language." *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 626*

" اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّقَاقِ وَالنَّفَاقِ وَسُوءِ الْأَخْلَاقِ "

A prayer of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>: "I seek refuge with Thee from opposing the truth, hypocrisy and bad **manners**." *Sunan an-Nasā'ī, Book 50, Hadith 44*

سُئِلَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - : مَا أَكْثَرُ مَا  
يُدْخِلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ : " التَّقْوَى وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ "

When asked as to what most admits people to Paradise, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>

answered: “Piety and good **manners**.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4387*

## 8. DUTY TO BE MODERATE

Exercising and observing moderation in our affairs is an extremely good trait and it is one’s duty to inculcate this characteristic in one’s self.

As the Holy Qur’an says in the matter of spending:

وَلَا تُجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١١١﴾

And utter not your prayer aloud, nor utter it *too* low, but seek a **way between**. (17:111)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾

(Referring to the servants of the Gracious God):

And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but **moderate** between the two; (25:68)

وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۖ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿٢٠﴾

And walk thou at a **moderate** pace, and lower thy voice; verily, the most disagreeable of voices is the voice of the ass. (31:20)

Moderation in the guise of the “Middle Way” is also highly emphasised in the teachings of Gautama Buddha. Following are some admonitions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in the context of moderation:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْمِلُوا فِي الطَّلَبِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “O people, fear Allah and be **moderate** in seeking a living.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 12, Hadith 2227*

" أَجْمِلُوا فِي طَلَبِ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُيَسَّرٍ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Be **moderate** in seeking worldly things, for everyone will be facilitated for which he was created.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 12, Hadith 2225*

سَدُّوْا وَقَارِبُوْا، وَاعْلَمُوْا أَنَّ لَنْ يَدْخَلَ أَحَدَكُمْ عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Do good deeds properly, sincerely and **moderately** and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise...” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāri, Book 81, Hadith 53*

"قَارِبُوْا وَسَدُّوْا فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ بِمُنْجِيهِ عَمَلُهُ  
وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Be moderate and adhere to **moderation**, for there is no one among you who will be saved by his deeds—not even me, unless Allah encompasses me with mercy and grace from Him.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4341*

اعْتَدِلُوا فِي الرُّكُوعِ وَالسُّجُودِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Be **moderate** in bowing and prostration.” *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Hadith 1028*

"إِنَّ الْهَدْيَ الصَّالِحَ وَالسَّمْتَ الصَّالِحَ  
وَالْإِقْتِصَادَ جُزْءٌ مِنْ خَمْسَةِ وَعِشْرِينَ جُزْءًا مِنَ النَّبُوَّةِ"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Good way, dignified good bearing and **moderation** are the twenty-fifth part of Prophethood.” *Sunan Abu Da’ūd, Book 43, Hadith 4*

## 9. DUTY TO BE MODEST AND CHASTE

Observing chastity and modesty are not only the foundations of a pure and uncorrupted society, but also extremely desirable personal traits and stepping-stones towards our own spiritual progress.



There are several Ahadith of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> with respect to observing modesty:

الْحَيَاءُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Modesty** is a part of Faith.” *Bulūgh al-Marām*, Book 16, Hadith 1524

" الْحَيَاءُ لَا يَأْتِي إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “**Modesty** does not bring anything except good.” *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Book 78, Hadith 144

" مَا كَانَ الْفُحْشُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا  
شَانَهُ وَمَا كَانَ الْحَيَاءُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Indecency is not present in anything but it mars it, and **modesty** is not present in anything but it beautifies it.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi*, Book 27, Hadith 80

" الْحَيَاءُ مِنَ  
الْإِيمَانِ وَالْإِيمَانُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالْبَدَأُ مِنَ الْجَفَاءِ وَالْجَفَاءُ فِي النَّارِ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “The **modesty** is from faith, and faith is in Paradise. Obscenity is from rudeness, and rudeness is in the Fire.” *Jami‘ at-Tirmidhi*, Book 27, Hadith 115

" إِنَّ لِكُلِّ دِينٍ خُلُقًا وَخُلُقُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَيَاءُ "

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Every religion has its distinct characteristic and the distinct characteristic of Islam is **modesty**.” *Sunan Ibn Māja*, Book 37, Hadith 4321

"إِلبسوا البياض؛ فإنها أطهر وأطيب، وكفنوا فيها موتاكم"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “Wear white clothes because they are the purest and they are closest to **modesty**, and shroud the dead in it.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Hadith 780*

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَبْدًا نَزَعَ مِنْهُ الْحَيَاءَ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “When Allah wants to destroy a person, He takes away **modesty** from him.” *Sunan Ibn Māja*, *Book 36*, *Hadith 129*

For further details on this subject, see item (xi) Observing Chastity, in Chapter 2.

## 10. DUTY TO BE PATIENT AND STEADFAST

Islam has placed great emphasis on the observing of patience and exercising of perseverance and fortitude. As it says in the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

O ye who believe! seek help with **patience** and Prayer; surely, Allah is with the steadfast. (2:154)

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾  
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

... Give glad tidings to the **patient**,

Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say, “Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.”

It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided. (2:156-158)

تُتَبَلَوْنَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ<sup>٦٧</sup> وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا<sup>٦٨</sup> وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزَمِ الْأُمُورِ



You shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your persons and you shall surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set up equals to God. But if you show **fortitude** and act righteously, that indeed is *a matter* of strong determination. (3:187)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا

O ye who believe! be **steadfast** and strive to excel in steadfastness ... (3:201)

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبْتَ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأَوْدُوا حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا<sup>٦٩</sup>

And Messengers indeed have been rejected before thee; but notwithstanding their rejection and persecution they remained **patient** until Our help came to them... (6:35)

وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

... And Allah is with those who are **steadfast**. (8:67)

وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

And be thou **steadfast**; for surely, Allah suffers not the reward of the righteous to perish. (11:116)

وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

And We will certainly give those who are **steadfast** their reward according to the best of their works. (16:97)

وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

And endure thou with **patience**; and verily, thy **patience** is *possible* only with *the help of Allah*... (16:128)

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا ۖ وَمِنْ آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ

تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣١﴾

Bear **patiently** then what they say, and glorify thy Lord with *His* praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and glorify *Him* in the hours of the night and at the sides of the day, that thou mayest find *true* happiness. (20:131)

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

So be thou **patient**. Surely the promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty *of faith* make light of thee. (30:61)

إِصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ

Bear **patiently** with what they say... (38:18)

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ

So have **patience**. Surely the promise of Allah is true... (40:56)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

As for those who say, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remain **steadfast**, the angels descend on them, *saying*, “Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. (41:31)

وَاسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

And be thou **steadfast** as thou art commanded... (42:16)

وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا

So wait **patiently** for the judgment of thy Lord; for assuredly thou art before Our eyes; ... (52:49)

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَبِيلًا

So be **patient** with admirable **patience**. (70:6)

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَبِيلًا

And bear **patiently** all that they say; and part with them in a decent manner. (73:11)

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ  
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا  
بِالصَّبْرِ

Surely, man is in a *state of loss*,

Except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to accept truth, and exhort one another to be **steadfast**. (103:3-4)

In the context of patience, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

“*Sabr* [Patience] is one of the natural human states. One has to exercise it in the face of calamities, ailments and hardships which constantly befall him. Man comes to practise patience in the end, albeit after a great deal of moaning and crying. But it should be clearly understood, that, according to the Holy

Book of God, such steadfastness is not part of morals, instead it is a state that follows exhaustion as a matter of course. After all, it is quite natural for man to cry and bewail in the face of a calamity, but, in the end, after venting his feelings, he recovers and after the climax he begins to relax. Both these states are natural and have nothing to do with morals. On the contrary, the moral part of it would be that after losing something, considering it to be a trust from God Almighty, one should not complain about it. Rather, one should affirm that God has taken back what belonged to Him in the first place, and should accept the will of God. Regarding this particular moral quality, God Almighty's Holy Word, the Glorious Qur'an, says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ  
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾  
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ  
رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾  
أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ  
هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

This means that: ‘O believers! We shall keep trying you. Thus, at times you will be overtaken by fear; sometimes you will be visited by adversity and starvation or you will suffer financially; sometimes your lives will be endangered, sometimes your toil will be fruitless and your efforts will not yield the desired results; and sometimes your dear children will die. Therefore, convey glad tidings to those, who, when they are visited by a calamity, affirm: We belong to God and we are His trust and vassals. The truth is that trust should return to its owner. These are the people who are the recipients of Divine grace and these are the people who have found their way to God.’

In short, the name of this moral quality is steadfastness or, in other words, willing submission to the Divine will. From another perspective, this quality may also be called ‘*Adl* [equity or justice.] Throughout a believer's life, God Almighty does so many things to his liking and manifests thousands of matters in accord with his wishes, and He has blessed him with so many bounties in keeping with his needs, that he cannot even count them. Therefore, if God ever

desires that man should comply with His will, it would be unfair and improper not to submit to His will, to find excuses, or to lose faith and go astray.” [Islamī Ūṣūl ki Philosophy, Rūḥānī Khazā’in, vol. 10, pp. 361-362; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 30-32]

## 11. DUTY TO PONDER, REASON AND REFLECT

Along with seeking knowledge, one owes oneself the duty to ponder, reason and reflect. In the animal kingdom, the ability to ponder and reflect is unique to human beings. The mental process of pondering and reflection eventually leads to extraction of hidden truths and wisdom that, otherwise, may not be obvious to the individual. It is only through reflection and pondering over the verses of the Holy Qur’an that we understand its subtle and finer points. Thus, the importance of reflection and pondering—particularly over the creation of God—is highly emphasised in the Holy Qur’an:

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ  
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to you that you may **reflect**

Upon this world and the next... (2:220-221)

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you that you may **ponder**.  
(2:267)

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي  
خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ  
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and **ponder** over the creation of the heavens and the earth: “Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.” (3:192)

كَذٰلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْاٰیٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ یَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Thus do We expound the Signs for a people who **reflect**. (10:25)

وَهُوَ الَّذِیْ مَدَّ الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ وَانْهَارًا ۖ وَ مِنْ كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ جَعَلَ فِیْهَا زَوْجَیْنِ اِثْنَیْنِ یُغْشِی الْیَلَّ النَّهَارُ ۚ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾

And He it is Who spread out the earth and made therein mountains and rivers. And of the fruits He has made them in pairs, male and female. He causes the night to cover the day. Therein, verily, are Signs for a people who **reflect**. (13:4)

اَفَمَنْ یَّعْلَمُ اَنَّا اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَا هُوَ اَعْمٰی ۚ اِنَّا یَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُو الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾

Is he then, who knows that what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord is the truth, like one who is blind? *But* only those gifted with understanding will **reflect**; (13:20)

وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ یَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And Allah sets forth similitudes for men that they may **reflect**. (14:26)

هٰذَا بَدَلُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ لَیُنْذَرُوْا بِهٖ وَ لَیَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّا هُوَ اللّٰهُ وَ اَحَدٌ وَ لَیَذَكَّرُ اُولُو الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾



This is a message manifestly delivered for the benefit of mankind that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that He is the only One God, and that those possessed of understanding may **ponder**. (14:53)

يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ  
الشَّجَرِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Therewith He grows crops *of all kinds* for you, and the olive and the date-palm, and the grapes, and all sorts of fruits. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who **reflect**. (16:12)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ  
إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

And We have sent down to you the Reminder<sup>21</sup> that you may explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them, and that they may **reflect**. (16:45)

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ  
الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٦﴾  
ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ۚ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ  
بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

And thy Lord has inspired the bee, *saying*, “Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build.

<sup>21</sup> Here the “Reminder” refers to the Holy Qur’an.

“Then eat of every *kind* of fruit, and then pursue submissively the paths prescribed by your Lord.” There comes forth from their (bees’) bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who **reflect**. (16:69-70)

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَىٰ  
بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

And We gave the Book to Moses, after We had destroyed the earlier generations, as *a source of* enlightenment for men, and a guidance and a mercy, that they might **reflect**. (28:44)

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ  
مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ  
فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Do they not **reflect** in their own minds? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two but in accordance with the requirements of wisdom and for a fixed term. But many among men believe not in the meeting of their Lord. (30:9)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً  
وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And *one* of His Signs is *this*, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who **reflect**. (30:22)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْظُمُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ ۚ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مَشْئِئًا وَفَرَادًى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا ۚ

Say, “I only exhort you *to do* one thing: that you stand up before Allah in twos and singly and then **reflect**.” (34:47)

كُتِبَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾

A Book which We have revealed to thee, full of blessings, that they may **reflect** over its verses, and that those gifted with understanding may take heed. (38:30)

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٥﴾

Will they not, then, **ponder** over the Qur'an, or is it that upon *their* hearts are locks of their own *making*? (47:25)

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

And of everything have We created pairs, that you may **reflect**. (51:50)

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

If We had sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, thou wouldst certainly have seen it humbled and rent asunder for fear of Allah. And these are similitudes that We set forth for mankind that they may **reflect**. (59:22)

The Ahadith of the Holy Prophet also lay emphasis on the use of reflection and pondering:

لَا عَقْلَ كَالْتَذَبِيرِ

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: “There is no wisdom like **reflection**.” *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 37, Hadith 4358*

## 12. DUTY TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

While we remain mere servants of God, the Holy Qur'an encourages us to develop a relationship of love and friendship with Him. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

And there are some among men who take for themselves objects of worship other than Allah, **loving** them as they should **love** Allah. But those who believe are stronger in *their* love for Allah... (2:166)

وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ  
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۖ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَ  
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۖ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ۖ

... Truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for **love** of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for *ransoming* the captives; ... (2:178)

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ  
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Say, "If you **love** Allah, follow me: *then* will Allah **love** you and forgive you your faults. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

Say, "Obey Allah and the Messenger;" but if they turn away, then *remember that* Allah loves not the disbelievers. (3:32-33)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ

O ye who believe! fear Allah and **seek the way of approach unto Him**.  
(5:36)

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

Behold! the **friends** of Allah shall certainly have no fear, nor shall they grieve—

Those who believed and acted ever righteously. (10:63-64)

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا  
إِنَّا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

(Referring to the virtuous):

And they feed, for **love** of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner,

Saying, “We feed you for Allah’s pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you. (76:9-10)

Despite the fact that the Holy Qur’an lays great emphasis on “loving” God and the history of Muslim Sufis and saints is full of such attestations, the notion that God could indeed be loved and befriended—other than being our Master—had practically died out by the middle of the nineteenth century. It was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, who restored this important notion among the people and equated the development of a personal relationship with God with the very purpose of religion. As he says in his book, *Chashma’-e-Masīhī*:

“The purpose of religion is that man should obtain deliverance from his passions and should develop personal love for God Almighty through certain faith in His existence and His perfect attributes. Such love of God is the paradise, which will appear in diverse shapes in the hereafter.” [*Chashma’-e-Masīhī, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 20, pp. 352. English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 4]

It is apparent from what we have said so far that the worship of God and

compassion with humanity occupy a prominent place in a Muslim's life. A Muslim leads a balanced life in which his relationship with his fellow beings is not sacrificed for the sake of his relationship with God, and vice versa.

Beyond the superficial, however, there is a deeper, more subtle purpose in life. Although worship of God and service to humanity are highly emphasized in Islam, these are just the means to achieve the real objective. The real purpose in life is to find God Himself. This is the real reward that Islam promises a believer.

A Muslim should make a clear distinction between the means and the end. All the worships we have talked about are necessary but are not the end by themselves. All the acts of righteousness we have talked about are very good and creditable but are not the end by themselves. All the articles of faith we have learned are extremely important but are not the ultimate objective. These are all but the means to achieve the real objective, which is God Himself. He is the real objective and all else are just the means to obtain Him. All of one's efforts must be devoted towards the achieving of this specific goal. Those fortunate ones, who found God, achieved their real objective in life and also the highest reward that Islam has to offer in this world.

Other religions have beliefs and acts of worship and social and moral codes, as well. However, the concept of God they present is of an impersonal Supreme Being Who is aloof from His creation and can only be reached through intermediaries such as prophets and saints or worse—through idols. Islam, on the other hand, offers a very personal God with the possibility of a very personal relationship with Him. This relationship is so special that it cannot be truly likened to anything else in this world. This relationship has the intimacy of two lifelong friends; the love of two young lovers; and the affection that exists between a mother and her child. Establishment of this special relationship with God is really the true theme of the religion of Islam. This, then, is the relationship for which all worldly possessions could be given up; this, then, is the relationship for which one's life could be sacrificed.

And let us be clear about something: God is there for the taking! He is so close to us that we cannot even imagine; and He is so eager to be befriended that we would be really surprised. All that is needed on our part is

some effort to take Him. We have learned the basic outline of what we have to do: our beliefs should be correct and our convictions strong; our worship should be sincere and done with full attention; and our actions should be unselfish and based on love for humanity. If one does all this, in due course of time one will find God.

The fruits of this relationship with God are unlimited. With God on our side, we will have great confidence and will not be afraid of anybody or anything in this world. Our prayers will be heard with great frequency; we will feel peace and contentment in our hearts; we will obtain great insights into the strange workings of this physical and spiritual universe of ours; and finally, if we are truly fortunate, God may bless us with His communion and converse. And when that happens, we have pretty well achieved all the spiritual delights that we could possibly get in this life; to get more, we will have to wait for the next one.

In summary, the individual's life in Islam is very important with all its obligations and potential for moral and spiritual advancement. It is truly a masterpiece of God's creation. As a vicegerent of God, man is chosen because of his eminent and unique position among God's diverse creatures. At the same time, the religion of Islam shows man the path to obtain God's nearness and pleasure. Thus, when man discharges his trust and achieves communion with God, he represents his greatest achievement on earth. One's life, therefore, should not be taken frivolously.

Seeking of God and loving Him is a theme that is common to other religions as well:

In the **Jewish** confession of faith, the Shema emphasises the love of God, in the following words:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

**Jesus Christ**<sup>as</sup> reiterated the teachings of the Torah. When one of the Pharisees asked him as to what was the "great commandment", Jesus<sup>as</sup> replied:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Mathew 22:37

The **Hindu faith** is no exception when it comes to the importance of love for the Supreme Being. Below is a passage from the Bhagavad Gita<sup>22</sup>, the Song of the Lord:

“Being freed from attachment, fear and anger, being fully absorbed in Me and taking refuge in Me, many, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of Me—and thus they all attained transcendental love for Me.” (Text 10)

“If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.” (Text 26)

“To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” (Text 10)

In **Buddhism**, the concept of Nirvana—achieving union with God—is analogous to the Islamic concept of *fanā fillah*—being lost in God.

It is in fact in the very germ of man to have a relationship with God. As **Blaise Pascal** (1623-1662), the French scientist, mathematician and philosopher, puts it:

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator.”

Much of the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> are devoted to expounding on this subject of man’s relationship with his Creator. As to how such a relationship of love and friendship can be established with God, he writes in his book, *Islami Ūṣūl ki Philosophy*, in the following words:

“The means, which the Holy Qur’an has taught us of establishing a spiri-

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<sup>22</sup> Excerpted from “Sriman Bhagavatam Tenth Canto part One by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, courtesy of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International.



tual and perfect relationship with God, is Islam and the prayer set out in the *Surah Fatihah*. This means that one must first devote one's life to the cause of God, and then should be occupied with the prayer that the Muslims have been taught in *Surah Fatihah*. This is the essence of Islam. This is the only means of reaching God and drinking of the water of true salvation. This is the only means, which the law of nature has appointed for man's higher progress and his meeting with God. Only those find God who enter into the spiritual fire, which is the essence of Islam, and occupy themselves with the supplication taught in the *Surah Fatihah*. Islam is the burning fire which, by consuming our lower life and by burning up our false deities, offers the sacrifice of our lives and properties and honour before our Holy God. We drink the water of a new life from this spring and all our spiritual faculties establish a relationship with God. Like lightning, a fire emerges from inside us and another fire descends upon us from above and by their meeting all our passions and the love of anything beside God are consumed and we become dead to our previous life. This condition is called Islam by the Holy Qur'an. Through Islam our passions suffer a death and through prayer we are revived again. For this second life, revelation is necessary. Arrival at this stage is called meeting with God, that is to say, beholding God. Arriving at this stage a person establishes a relationship with God as if he sees Him with his eyes. He is bestowed strength and all his senses and inner faculties are illumined and the attraction of a pure life is generated with great force. On arriving at this stage, God becomes the eye of a person with which he sees and becomes his tongue with which he speaks, and becomes his hand with which he grips, and becomes his ear with which he hears, and becomes his feet with which he walks. This is the stage to which Allah the Exalted refers by saying:

يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ

The hand of God is above their hands; (48:11)  
and also as He says:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

It was not thou who didst throw but it was God Who threw. (8:18)

At this stage, complete unification ensues with God Almighty and His holy will saturates the soul, and moral faculties that were weak become firm like mountains, and reason and intellect acquire a high degree of delicacy. This is

the meaning of the verse:

وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ

He strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. (58:23)

At this stage the streams of love and devotion well up in such a manner that to die for Almighty and to endure thousands of hardships for Him and to be disgraced for His sake, becomes as easy as breaking a straw. A person is pulled towards God Almighty and does not know who is pulling him. A hidden hand upholds him, and to do God's will becomes the purpose of his life. At this stage, God Almighty appears very near as He has said:

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

We are closer to him than his jugular vein. (50:17)

In that condition a person is like ripe fruit which falls of itself from the tree. In the same way, all the low relationships of such a person come to an end and his relationship with God becomes so strong that he draws away from creation and is honoured with the converse of God Almighty. For achieving this rank, the doors are still open as they were open before, and God's grace bestows this bounty upon the seekers today as He bestowed it before. But, this path is not found through mere words and this door is not opened by useless talk and boasts. There are many who desire but there are few who find. The reason is that this rank depends upon true endeavour and true sacrifice. You can go on talking till Judgement Day without avail. To step out in sincerity on to the fire of which people are afraid is the first condition of this path. If there is not practical eagerness, it is vain to talk of it. In this connection, God Almighty says:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۚ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

When My servants inquire from thee concerning Me, tell them I am close. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he calls Me. So they should seek to attain my nearness through prayers and be guided. (2:187) [*Islami Ūṣūl ki Phi-*

osophy, *Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 10, pp. 394-396; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 264-266]

Expanding further on the theme of having a personal relationship with God, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Kashf-ul-Ghiṭā*:

Put forth your utmost efforts to recognize God, finding Whom is salvation and meeting Whom is deliverance. He manifests Himself to him who seeks Him with love and sincerity of heart, and He reveals Himself to him who becomes truly His. Pure hearts are His thrones, and tongues that are free from falsehood, abuse and vain talk are the places of His revelation. He who loses himself in seeking His pleasure becomes a manifestation of His miraculous power.”[*Kashf-ul-Ghiṭā*, *Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 14, pp. 188; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. xxxiv]

The love of God is not something that comes by easily. Seekers of God ache and pine for this love all their lives. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> alludes to this situation in one of his discourses, in the following words:

“It is the way of God Almighty that He bestows the blessings of love, eagerness and understanding after sufferings. A bounty that is easily acquired is not appreciated. It is well said by Sa‘dī<sup>23</sup>:

گر نه باشد بدوست راه بردن  
شرط عشق است در طلب مردن

Even if it is not possible to reach the Friend;  
Love demands that one should die seeking.

[*Malḡūzāt*, vol. 4, p. 245; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 32]

As to why human beings should love God—a Being Who is invisible and way out of our apparent reach and class—is answered by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> in his book *Nūrul Qur'an*, part 2:

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<sup>23</sup> Sa‘dī Shirazi (1210-1291), a Sufi poet from Shiraz, Iran during the medieval period who is well regarded for the quality of his writings and moralistic content.

In point of fact, when a person falls in love with someone and his love is total, it becomes his food and his drink, as it were. Indeed he takes on the complexion of the character and lifestyle of the beloved. The greater the love, the more a person is involuntarily drawn towards the qualities of the loved one, so much so, that he becomes his very reflection. That is why, consistent with his capacity, a person who loves God acquires, metaphorically speaking, God's light. [*Nūrul Qur'an, part 2, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 9, p. 430; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 36-37)

According to the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, true love should be reserved only for God or for the pious people of God. As he says in his book *Islāmī Ūṣūl ki Philosophy*:

“In short, the true meaning of the Qur'anic teaching is that love, which in reality means to reflect in one's person the qualities of the beloved, is not permissible except for God Almighty and for the righteous ones. Indeed it is strictly forbidden for all others.” [*Nūrul Qur'an, part 2, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 9, p. 433-434; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 3, p. 39-40]

### 13. DUTY TO REPENT

To err is human and we are constantly prone to committing faults and sins. However, God has taught us that such actions can be rectified through repentance and seeking of God's forgiveness—provided that these are carried out in good faith and not just in name. The Holy Qur'an lays great emphasis on seeking repentance as is apparent from the following verses:

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾  
وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي  
تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

Verily, Allah undertakes to accept the **repentance** of only those who do evil ignorantly and then repent soon after. These are they to whom Allah turns with mercy; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

There is no *acceptance of repentance* for those who *continue to* do evil until, when death faces one of them, he says, "I do repent now," nor for those who die disbelievers. It is for these We have prepared a painful punishment. (4:18-19)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ

Surely, Allah will not **forgive** that any partner be associated with Him; but He will **forgive** whatever is short of that to whomsoever He pleases. (4:49)

وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

And ask **forgiveness** of Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (4:107)

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾

And whoso does evil or wrongs his soul, and then asks **forgiveness** of Allah, will *surely* find Allah Most Forgiving, Merciful. (4:111)

فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

But whoso **repents** after his transgression and amends, then will Allah surely turn to him in mercy; verily, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. (5:40)

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

Will they not then turn to Allah and beg His **forgiveness**, while Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful? (5:75)

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ ﴿٩١﴾

And seek **forgiveness** of your Lord; then turn to Him *wholeheartedly*, Verily, my Lord is Merciful, Most Loving. (11:91)

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ

And verily, thy Lord is full of **forgiveness** for mankind despite their wrongdoing. (13:7)

قُلْ يُعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ

اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۖ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلُمُوهُ ۚ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا

تُنصَرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Say, “O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls! Despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah **forgives** all sins. Verily He is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

And turn ye to your Lord, and submit yourselves to Him, before there comes unto you the punishment; *for* then you shall not be helped. (39:54-55)

اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾  
غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ

Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing,

The Forgive of sin and the Acceptor of **repentance**,... (40:3-4)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ۖ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُم سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ  
وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

O ye who believe! turn to Allah in sincere **repentance**. It may be that your

Lord will remove the evil *consequences* of your deeds and make you enter Gardens through which rivers flow... (66:9)

#### 14. DUTY TO BE RIGHTEOUS & GOD-FEARING

Majority of the traits that are desirable to be developed in one's own person fall under the category of righteousness and God-fearing. It is for this reason that exhortations to be righteous and God-fearing are repeatedly mentioned in the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. As it says in the Holy Qur'an:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ  
الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۖ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَ  
الْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۖ وَالسَّائِدِينَ فِي الرِّقَابِ ۖ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى  
الزَّكَاةَ ۖ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ  
الْبَأْسِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

It is not **righteousness** that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but *truly righteous* is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask *for charity*, and for *ransoming* the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the Zakāt; and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and *the steadfast* in time of war; it is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing. (2:178)

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اٰدَمُ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُّوَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۚ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۗ

O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of **righteousness**—that is the best. (7:27)

On the subject of righteousness, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes in his book, *Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*:

“Righteousness means that one must be mindful even of the smallest details of the Divine trusts and covenants and also of all the trusts and covenants of one’s fellow beings, as far as it may be possible. That is, one must try to fulfil, to the best of one’s ability, all the requirements in their minutest details.” [ *Brāhīn-e-Aḥmadiyya*, Part V, *Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 21, pp. 210; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 348]

## 15. DUTY TO SEEK SALVATION

The subject of salvation is already discussed at some length in Chapter 1, under the heading of **The Purpose of Worship in Islam** (item 6).

The final obligation that one has towards one’s own self is to obtain salvation in the hereafter. Since the eventual verdict on one’s deeds and the final decision on one’s fate depend entirely on God, the only thing that one can do in this life is to pursue and strive for things that would increase the chances of one’s salvation in the hereafter.

While it is understood that deeds of righteousness and piety are indeed some of the actions that would increase our chances of salvation, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> makes an interesting point that the love of the Divine is a very important factor in the entire equation. As he writes in his book, *Chashma’-e-Masīhī*:

“Next to understanding, what is needed for salvation is the love of God. It is obvious that no one seeks to torment a person who loves him.

Love attracts love and pulls toward itself. If one loves another truly then even if one does not inform that person of one’s love it has at least this much effect that the person loved cannot become an enemy of the one who loves. That is why it has been said that a heart inclines towards another heart....

Thus when man, although he does not know that which is hidden, becomes aware of the hidden love of a person, how can God Almighty, Who knows the hidden, remain unaware of the sincere love of anyone? Love is a wonderful thing. Its fire overcomes the fire of sin and puts out the flame of disobedience.



True and personal and perfect love cannot subsist along with punishment. One of the signs of true love is that it is a part of the nature of a true lover that he is fearful of his beloved cutting asunder from him, and considers himself lost if he commits the slightest default, and deems it a poison to oppose his beloved, and always yearns to meet him and is so deeply affected by distance and absence that he becomes like one dead....

Thus the source of true salvation is the personal love of God, the Glorious, which draws to itself the love of God Almighty through humility and supplication and constant *Istighfār*. When man's love of God becomes perfect and its fire burns up human passions, then God's love for him suddenly falls upon his heart and pulls him out of the foulness of the lower life. He then acquires the colour of the holiness of God the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining, and he partakes by way of reflection in all Divine attributes. He then becomes a manifestation of Divine reflections and, through him all the mysteries hidden and latent in the eternal treasure of *Rububiyyat* are disclosed to the world.” [Chashma'-e-Masīhī, *Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 20, pp. 378-380; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 260-262]

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> continues with this theme in his book, *Chashma'-e Ma'rifat*, where he writes:

“It is impossible and contrary to God's benevolence that He should condemn to hell a servant of His who is devoted to Him in his love with his whole heart and soul and with full sincerity in a manner which is the characteristic of true love....

How can such a person be the subject of torment? Indeed the truth is that perfect love is salvation. Can you deliberately cast into the fire a child of yours whom you love? Then how will God, Who is altogether love, cast into the fire those who love Him and every particle of whom is sunk in His love? No sacrifice is better than the sacrifice that a person should so love the True Beloved that he should realize that no one else beside Him is dear to him. Not only this, but he should give up the love of his own self and should adopt a bitter life for His sake. When he arrives at this stage, then undoubtedly he attains salvation....

At this stage of love a person does not merely imagine that he has attained salvation, but his love teaches that the love of God is with him and the love of God causes contentment and peace to descend upon his heart. God begins to treat him as He has always treated those who are dear to Him and are accepted of Him.” [Chashma'-e-Ma'rifat, *Rūḥāni Khazā'in*, vol. 23, pp. 419-420; Eng-

lish tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 267-268]

While a favourable requital of our deeds in the hereafter is highly desirable, the fruits of salvation in fact begin in this very world. As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes:

True and real salvation is bestowed in this very world. It is a light which descends upon the hearts and shows who is floundering in the pit of ruin. Follow the way of truth and wisdom for thereby you will find God. Create warmth in your hearts so that you might be able to move towards the truth. Unfortunate is the heart that is cold, and ill-starred is the nature that is melancholy, and dead is the conscience which is not bright. Be not less than the bucket that falls into the well and comes out full, and be not like the sieve which cannot hold any water which enters it from one side and goes out at the other. Try that you should become healthy and that the poisonous heat of the fever of seeking the world may be removed in consequence of which there is no light in the eyes, there is no hearing in the ears, the taste of the tongue is corrupted, there is no grip in the hands and there is no strength in the feet. Cut asunder one relationship so another might be established. Block your heart in one direction so that it might find its way in another direction. Throw away the foul insect of the earth so that you might be bestowed the brilliant diamond of heaven. Turn to the Fountainhead which revived Adam with the Divine Spirit so that you may be bestowed kingdom over all things that was bestowed upon your father. [*Review of Religions—Urdu*, vol. I, pp. 23-29; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 259-260]

Finally, it should be understood that while we strive to be pious and carry out deeds of righteousness, the granting of salvation is entirely through the grace of God. As the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> states:

“Salvation is not attained through one’s effort, but through the grace of God Almighty.” [*Malfūzāt* vol. iv, pp. 206; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 271]

“Remember that no one can attain salvation through his deeds; salvation is attained purely through grace.” [*Chashma’-e-Ma’rifat, Rūḥānī Khazā’in*, vol. 23, pp. 415; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 2, p. 277]

## **Chapter 4**

# **OBLIGATIONS TO OTHER CREATURES**

**O**ne important role of Man in the scheme of things, and an extremely important purpose of his existence, is acting as God's vicegerent on earth. In the allegorical account of man's creation in the Holy Qur'an, God says to the angels that He is going to appoint a vicegerent on earth. While the angels seem to question the wisdom of such an act, God advises them that He knows what they do not:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ  
يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ ۚ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۚ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ  
مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

And when your Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to appoint a vicegerent in the earth,' they said: 'Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorder in it, and shed blood? —and we glorify Thee with Thy praise and extol Thy holiness.' He answered: 'I know what you know not. (*Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:31)

While the above verse and account have often been interpreted to refer to Adam<sup>as</sup> as the first Prophet of God, it in fact refers more appropriately to the progeny of Adam<sup>as</sup> and to the human race in general. While his<sup>as</sup> indiscretion with reference to the forbidden tree is explicitly mentioned in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an, there is never any mention of him causing any disorder or shedding anyone's blood by himself.

While commenting on this verse, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmūd Ahmad<sup>ra</sup>, Khalifatul Masih II, makes a very interesting point that both

views—that of the angels and that of God—were in fact correct. No doubt, man was going to commit disorder and shed blood of other people; but the inherent wisdom behind the creation of man was also not fully apparent to the angels at the time.

The account of Adam<sup>as</sup> in the Holy Qur'an is full of many meanings, interpretations and perspectives and the scholars have written a great deal on this subject. However, the one aspect that we would like to discuss at some length here pertains to Adam's progeny or mankind being the *khalifa* or vicegerent of God. The concept of *khilafat* or vicegerency carries the notion of exercising power and authority under the name of someone else. Thus, the appointment of mankind as the vicegerent of God bestows perhaps the greatest honour upon the human species and carries in it a grand prophecy. The question arises as to what is the role of mankind as vicegerent of God?

When a human being acts as the *khalifa* of a prophet, he is empowered with both spiritual and temporal dominion over his community. This kind of vicegerency is very common in history and is easy to understand. What kind of empowerment is then involved when mankind acts as the vicegerent of God? The Supreme Being of the universe possesses infinite powers. He is the Creator and the Destroyer; the Giver of Life and the Bringer of Death; the Nourisher, the Provider and the Protector. He is the Honourer and the Abaser; the Constrictor and the Expander; the Mighty and the Merciful. In the appointment of man as God's vicegerent, God has empowered him with all such attributes—of course to the extent that man is capable of exercising them considering his intrinsic limitations.

For nearly thirteen centuries after the Holy Qur'an was revealed, mankind remained nearly oblivious to its role as God's vicegerent in the temporal sense. The sphere in which mankind could exercise its benevolent or destructive powers was rather limited. It could indeed kill many people or animals but it could never conceive of being able to destroy an entire species; it could lay an entire field to waste but it could not extend such malevolence to the entire country or continent. Thus, both the benevolent and malevolent acts of mankind remained limited to rather small spheres.

The last hundred years or so, however, have completely changed the existing status quo. Humanity's scientific and technological progress has

suddenly given it immense powers to be used for good or evil purposes. Its destructive powers are not limited to simply burning down a field but allow it to make entire continents uninhabitable through the thousands of nuclear devices possessed by many nations. Its powers to pollute are not confined to a single well or pond but in fact extend to destroying large aquifers in the ground, making vast lakes undrinkable, and contaminating the oceans with non-degradable waste. Our powers to kill are not limited to a few hundred or a few thousand animals but we have actually sent a number of species to the path of total extinction and our lifestyle is endangering many more that depend upon us for their very survival.

We have gained immense temporal powers on this earth and our progress in the fields of science and technology is only in a stage of infancy. In another century, our ability to wreak havoc on this planet will increase manifold. One simply shudders at the thought as to what our capability might be say in a thousand years. In the above verse, God is not simply asking us to be a good citizen on earth and share our wealth and resources with other life forms. God, in fact, is asking us to be a good *custodian* of this planet—to act in His name—and carry out His work as His appointed vicegerent on the planet. For this purpose, He has made the forces of nature subservient to man. To use a cliché, exercise of great power requires use of good judgment and great wisdom. Unfortunately, our record to date is not very commendable.

The numerous attributes of God mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are there to encourage us to emulate these traits and to be like Him when acting on His behalf. Thus, it is no coincidence that the three attributes of Nourisher, Gracious and Merciful outnumber all other attributes combined together in the Holy Qur'an. As vicegerent of God on earth, humanity is expected to provide for and nourish all other life forms under its custodianship and deal with them in a merciful and kind manner. In this regard, we are not only our brother's keeper but also the warden of all living things on earth. Not only this, but our stewardship also extends to the environment in general which in turn provides proper habitat to earth's vast flora and fauna.

The following Ahadith relate the exhortations of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in regards to the kind treatment of all creatures:

"بينما رجل يمشى بطريق اشتد عليه العطش، فوجد بئراً فنزل فيها فشرب، ثم خرج فإذا كلب يلهث يأكل الثرى من العطش، فقال الرجل: لقد بلغ هذا الكلب من العطش مثل الذي كان قد بلغ منى، فنزل البئر فملأ خفه ماء ثم أمسكه بفيه، حتى رقي فسقى الكلب، فشكر الله له فغفر له" قالوا: يارسول الله إن لنا في البهائم أجراً؟ فقال: في كل كبدٍ رطبة أجر"

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said: "While a man was walking on his way, he became extremely thirsty. He found a well; he went down into it to drink water. Upon leaving it, he saw a dog, which was panting out of thirst. His tongue was lolling out and he was eating moist earth from extreme thirst. The man thought to himself: 'This dog is extremely thirsty as I was.' So he descended into the well, filled up his leather sock with water, and holding it in his teeth, climbed up and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah appreciated his action and forgave his sins". The Companions asked: "Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also?" He said, "A reward is given in connection with every living creature". *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 126*

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَنْ يُمَثَّلَ بِالْبَهَائِمِ

The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> forbade mutilating **animals**. *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 27, Hadith 3306*

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَنْ يُقْتَلَ شَيْءٌ مِنَ الدَّوَابِّ صَبْرًا

The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> forbade the killing of any **animal** when it is tied up (for use as a target). *Sunan Ibn Māja, Book 27, Hadith 3309*

"لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ مَثَّلَ بِالْحَيَوَانِ"

The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> said: “May Allah curse the one who disfigures an **animal**. *Sunan an-Nasā’ī, Book 43, Hadith 82*

أَنَّهُ كَرِهَ أَنْ يُجَرَّشَ بَيْنَ الْبَهَائِمِ

It is reported by Mujāhid that Ibn ‘Umar disliked making **animals** fight each other. *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Book 1, Hadith 1232*

“إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الْقِتْلَةَ وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الذَّبْحَةَ، وَلِيُحَدِّثَ أَحَدَكُمْ شَفْرَتَهُ وَلِيُرِحَ ذَبِيحَتَهُ”

The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup> said: “Verily, Allah has prescribed kindness for everything. So, when you kill, you must make the killing in the best manner; when you slaughter, make your slaughter in the best manner. Let one of you sharpen his knife and give ease to his **animal**.” *Riyāḍuṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, Hadith 640*

مَنْ رَحِمَ وَلَوْ ذَبِيحَةً، رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

The Messenger of Allah<sup>sa</sup>, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “Anyone who shows mercy, even to an **animal** meant for slaughtering, will be shown mercy by Allah on the Day of Rising.” *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Hadith 381*

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> writes that the attribute of graciousness on the part of God Almighty covers not only human beings, but all creatures in the universe. In this context, he writes:

“It is thus established that this grace which is manifested in thousands of ways for the comfort of all animates is an *ex gratia* bounty, which is not bestowed in consequence of any action but is a manifestation of Divine compassion, so that every animate should achieve its natural purpose and all its needs may be fulfilled. By virtue of this grace, Divine bounty provides for the needs of mankind and all animals and affords them protection so that their capacities should not remain in the realm of potentiality.” [*Brāḥīn-e*

*Aḥmadiyya, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 1, p. 447, footnote 11; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. 69-70)

In his book, *Kashful-Ghiṭā*, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> includes kind treatment of God's creatures as one of the objectives of his teachings:

“The purport of my teaching is: Believe in God as One without associate, and have sympathy with God's creatures and be of good conduct and think no ill.” [*Kashf-ul-Ghiṭā, Rūḥānī Khazā'in*, vol. 14, pp. 187; English tr. based on *The Essence of Islam*, vol. 1, p. xxxiii]



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